

**“We do not see things as they are.
We see them as we are”**

**Fictional Point of View and Reader Response:
An Empirical Exploration**

Valerie Lowe B.A. (Hons), M. A.

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
Department of Linguistics and Modern English Language,
Lancaster University.**

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To Mum and Dad

Acknowledgements

It is usual, I suppose, to begin an acknowledgements page by thanking all those people who have ‘been there’ for you during the uphill struggle that constitutes studying for a Ph.D. In my case, I want to begin by thanking all those who have ‘been there’ for me by not ‘being there’. These last few months have been necessarily lonely, and my family and friends have understood and supported my need to remain temporarily out of circulation, for which I am grateful.

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It is fitting that I should give the last word to one of the participants; they express more eloquently than I can the often vast amount of effort which the task has involved for them personally.

it took me hours and hours to do it (.) the point of that was not so much to say (.) 'you know I've spent ages on it so these should be good' (.) it's more to say that you know I've tried my best to be as honest and as thoughtful about the questions as I could possibly be (.) you know rather than saying 'oh I can't be bothered to spend another five minutes on it' (.) you know I tried to do as much as I possibly could (.) and therefore any sort of anything missing from the answers I gave (.) was probably because it's missing from me (laughs)

Abstract

This thesis reports the findings of two empirical studies into readers' responses to fictional point of view. The impetus for the research came from my complementary studies in stylistics and Women's Studies. On the one hand, stylisticians often argued that the use of an internal perspective invariably elicited a sympathetic response, due to the reader's access to the character or narrator's mind. On the other hand, feminist scholars were insisting on resisting readings, arguing that texts often represented a 'male' point of view that had little relevance for women readers. Obviously neither of these positions can be completely correct, since there are characters whose minds we might understand yet deplore, just as there must be male readers who resist a 'female' point of view in women's writing. I set out to explore how male and female readers responded to the internal perspective represented in two short stories, taking into account such factors as sex, age, literary training and personal experience. The thesis does not provide any 'answers', but confirms that responses are much less straightforward than 'acceptance' of, or resistance to, internal point of view.

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Chapter One

Fictional Point of View and Reader Response: An Empirical Exploration

1. 1 Introduction

You don't tell a story to yourself.
There's always someone else.
Even when there is no one.
(Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.49)

The impetus for this research comes from two initially separate areas of study which have served to enrich and deepen my reading of literature. Firstly, my particular enjoyment of women's writing has led me inevitably into studies of feminist theories, which in turn has led me to discover new meanings and a deeper level of enjoyment. My second area of interest is linguistics, which has led me naturally into the study of stylistics. In many ways, this is a perfect combination, since my predisposition as a feminist to read 'suspiciously' (Mills, 1995:2) finds an excellent means of expression in the tools of stylistic analysis. In the past, however, there has been a tendency for some stylisticians and literary critics, even for some feminist scholars, to assume that all readers respond to fiction in similar ways. In particular, within stylistics, the assumption that access to a character's internal point of view, i.e., a narrative which details the thoughts and feelings of the main protagonist, results in sympathy for that character, has appeared to be unproblematic, even inevitable. It is the relationship between the way in which point of view is presented and the reader's response that my research explores in this thesis.

My initial research interest was therefore to investigate the way that real readers respond to fiction (as opposed to critics or stylisticians), and what effect a character's point of view has on response. I also wanted to know the extent to which personal factors such as gender, age and personal experience affect the way that

readers relate to a character's point of view, in addition to such aspects as literary training, including awareness of feminist criticism. The perception of similarity between ourselves and a fictional character or some aspect of his or her situation can be expected to affect the way in which we respond to his or her point of view.

Alternatively, the way in which we have been taught to read texts may affect an intuitive response, a consideration which is particularly relevant to those readers who have been trained to recognise feminist aspects of texts.

I have acknowledged the part that feminist theories and stylistic analysis have to play in this thesis. However, during the course of my research, I discovered that some of the insights from research in the field of social psychology could be applied to our response to fictional characters. We have a tendency to analyse the actions, behaviour and 'personalities' of characters in a similar way to the way we interpret the behaviour of real people, and again this is related to the way in which a character's point of view is represented. Having access to a character's thoughts allows us to understand the motives behind their behaviour, and to judge them accordingly. Thus, insights from social psychology relating to the way in which we perceive people, assess their motivations, and assume cause and effect relationships, is relevant to readers' responses to fictional events.

1. 2 Structure of the Thesis

The first part of this thesis is structured in accordance with these dimensions. In Chapter Two, I will discuss the assumed relationship between author and reader, and alternative relationships proposed by feminist scholars, including the notion of 'resisting readings'. This leads naturally on to a discussion of the role of personal experience and literary training. I will also consider some of the insights arising from

the field of social psychology, including schema theory, and attribution theory, and the relevance of such theories to aspects such as characterisation. Issues such as these are an important preliminary to my discussion of point of view matters, since our perception of the ‘personalities’ of fictional characters is likely to be a determining factor in our response to their point of view. I will conclude Chapter Two with a discussion of some of the empirical studies which are of relevance to this research. The emphasis in Chapter Two is thus on the reader dimension of the relationship.

In Chapter Three, I will concentrate on the textual dimension, considering the informational differences between first and third-person narration before moving on to a more detailed discussion of the categorisation of different types of narration. I will consider Fowler’s (1986) system of categorisation for point of view focusing on linguistic elements, and conclude with its re-working by Simpson, (1993). The discussion will be exemplified throughout with fictional extracts.

Chapter Four is a detailed analysis of the narrative structure of the short story used in the preliminary study with which I began this research, Woolf’s *Lappin and Lapinova*, and is followed in Chapter Five by a report of the way in which readers responded to the characters’ points of view. My analysis of the way in which the participants respond to this story is also based on Simpson’s framework, since the way in which readers re-tell the story can be analysed in a similar way ¹. Chapter Six provides an analysis of the story used in the comparative study, Atwood’s *Uglypuss*, again drawing on Simpson’s framework, and is followed by a similar analysis of the readers’ responses to the characters’ points of view in this story. My discussions of the story and the responses will be taking into account the issues already referred to in

¹ The term ‘participants’ is used throughout to refer to the readers whose responses have provided the data, and is intended to acknowledge their major role in the research, and the considerable amount of work which has been involved for them.

Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Eight will provide a summary of the major findings from both studies, drawing comparisons and distinguishing contrasts between the two, and will include a critique of Simpson's framework of analysis, both in respect of fictional texts, and in relation to the readers' responses. I will conclude with some areas which can be considered for further research.

The fiction writers whose work is used as examples throughout this thesis are all women. This is a conscious decision due, firstly, to the fact that women writers are the writers I have studied most, and most recently. Secondly, it is a political decision since, until relatively recently, women's fiction has been underused to illustrate stylistic analysis. The women writers represented in this thesis are from diverse cultures, have widely differing styles, and include women of colour, lesbian writers, and writers from different historical periods. Finally, it is also a practical decision; I own more books by women. For this reason, the generic 'she' is used throughout to refer to the authors of the fictional works, since no male authors are included. By contrast, whenever a narrator is referred to as 'she' I will outline my reasons for doing so. In addition, all of the authors and critics are referred to by surname only. There is often a tendency to discriminate between men and women writers, referring to women by both first and last names, but to men only by the latter. The reasons for this are often claimed to be legitimate, since unless women writers are identified as such, references are often assumed by default to designate male authorship. However, pronominal references should be sufficient to eliminate any ambiguity, and it is fairer (and less time-consuming) to refer to everyone only by last name.

The research described in this thesis is not concerned only with describing differences between men and women, but considers the interaction between the sex of a fictional character and his or her experiences, and the sex of the reader and her or his

own experiences. I do not assume a straightforward relationship between gender and response, and suspect that other factors may be equally important. I hope that my research will further fill in the gap between theoretical discussions concerning the effect of an author's manipulation of point of view, and the responses of actual readers.

Chapter Two Text and Response: The Relationships between Author, Narrator, Character and Reader

2.1 Introduction

In my introductory chapter I used a quotation from Atwood's dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* which sums up, in my opinion, the nature of my investigation in this thesis. Writers do not, as a rule, tell stories to no one; they have in mind an imaginary reader to whom the text is addressed. Atwood's novel is set in a vague future, in which the female narrator, Offred, is isolated in a society where she is unsure who, if anyone, may be trusted. Unable to talk to anyone, her desperate desire for communication drives Offred to narrate her experiences onto audio tape, addressing a hypothetical imaginary listener who is 'willed' into existence (Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.279) by her need to have her story heard sympathetically. It is the relationship between the teller of a story and the reaction of the recipient which provides the basis for this exploration of readers' responses to point of view in fiction.

In this chapter, I will first consider the relationship between author and reader. I will subsequently discuss the potential for less than successful communication with reference to feminist readings and resistance, before considering some of the empirical studies which have been conducted into reading, thus leading the discussion into the realm of social psychology. Finally I will consider the usefulness of social theories for discussing characterisation in fiction.

2.2 Implied Reader and Implied Author

[...] It is plain enough to those who have done a reader's part in making up from bare hints dropped here and there the whole boundary and circumference of a living person; can hear in what we only whisper a living voice; can see, often when we say nothing about it, exactly what he looked like; know without a word to guide them precisely what he thought - [...] it is for readers such as these that we write [...] (Woolf, *Orlando*, p.35)

Central to this investigation is the question ‘who is the reader?’ and what is the relationship between the individual’s sex, experience, training etc. and the way in which point of view is presented? Like Offred’s imaginary listener, the reader addressed by the author is an artificial construction, an imaginary ideal, or ‘implied’ reader, who may or may not have a counterpart in the actual recipient of the story. As Gibson (1950:2) argues, we can make a distinction between the ‘real’ reader, and the ideal or ‘mock reader’ who is ‘an artifact, controlled, simplified, abstracted out of the chaos of day-to-day sensation’. Similarly, Booth distinguishes between the actual reader and the ideal recipient of the author’s message (Booth, 1961:140). Gibson and Booth are not alone in problematizing the notion of ‘the reader’, and the issue is normally discussed under the broad term of ‘reader-response’ theory. Attempting to distinguish the imaginary audience addressed by the author from the actual reader has given rise to numerous terms, as Freund notes;

Personifications - the mock reader (Gibson), the implied reader (Booth, Iser), the model reader (Eco), the super-reader (Riffaterre), the inscribed or encoded reader (Brooke-Rose), the narratee (Prince), the ideal reader (Culler), the literant (Holland), the actual reader (Jauss), the informed reader or the interpretive community (Fish) - proliferate. (Freund, 1987:7)

To these, Bennett adds

[...] the virtual reader and the real reader (Prince), the resisting reader (Fetterley), the actual, authorial and narrative audience (Rabinowitz), the embedded reader (Chambers), the Lacanian reader (Felman), the female reader (Schweickart, Flint), the gay or lesbian reader (Koestenbaum), and even the mind reader (Royle). (Bennett, 1995:3)

The proliferation of labels serves to emphasise the potential for a lack of fit between the author’s imaginary reader and the actual reader. It is not my intention to discuss individual reader-response critics in detail here, since their arguments tend to lack the close focus on linguistic features and the assumed effect on response which is the concern of this thesis. In addition, Leitch notes that many reader-response critics

prefer to associate themselves ‘with specific schools’ rather than with this general area (Leitch, 1995:33). Therefore, some of the writers to whom I refer may be more usually associated with other areas, such as feminism for example, as in the case of Fetterley, whose contribution is discussed in section 2.3 below. For this reason, reader-response criticism, where relevant, will be considered during the course of the discussion rather than in a separate section.

The variable distances between actual readers and implied readers is a potentially fruitful area of research, allowing us to investigate those factors that may be responsible for affecting readers’ sympathies, and to suggest the possible effect that the textual manipulation of point of view has on responses. Fowler suggests that the relationship between author and implied reader is ‘intersubjective’, ‘a communicative act calling upon shared values.’ (Fowler, 1977:81). In other words, the author and reader are assumed to be similar in their perception of what is good and bad, right and wrong, and so on. However, there is also the possibility that we may share moral values in general terms while differing from individual to individual. Members of the same culture may agree, for example, on the desirability of equality between sexes, races, classes etc., while having differing personal experiences within that culture. Such factors may affect the way in which a story is received; as Genette argues,

[...] the real author of the narrative is not only he who tells it, but also, and at times even more, he who hears it. And who is not necessarily the one it is addressed to: there are always people off to the side.

(Genette, 1980:262)

As Genette’s comments illustrate, there is always the possibility that the actual reader may differ from the implied reader, but may still be able to relate to the story indirectly, perhaps responding in a way not intended by the author. Readers may recognise but resist the preferred reading of a text, or feel excluded from the intended audience, an aspect which is discussed by feminist scholars, and considered in section

2.3 below. The term ‘implied reader’ therefore designates the ideal reader who responds in the way anticipated by the text.

The implied reader is only one half of the relationship however, since by the very fact of positing the notion of an ideal or implied reader and a preferred response, we also assume an impression of the author and the author’s intention. Not only is the (implied) reader a hypothetical being therefore, but behind the narrator stands an ‘implied author’, who can be seen as distinct from the actual author. Booth argues that the implied author may be ‘more or less distant from the reader’, and that the distance may be ‘moral’, ‘intellectual, or ‘aesthetic’; an ideal relationship between author and reader relies on a match between the ‘implied’ author and ‘implied’ reader. In order to achieve a ‘successful reading of his book’, the author must therefore attempt to

[...] eliminate all distance between the essential norms of his implied author and the norms of the postulated reader. (Booth, 1961:157)

The implied reader uses his or her knowledge of the author to build up an impression based on such factors as sex, period of writing, previous works and so on. Our information is cumulative, and may change as we learn more about them. Authors may subsequently change their views, or have views attributed to them which were not initially apparent, as in recent readings of Larkin’s poetry as racist, for example, factors which alter our impression of the implied author. The image of an author which the reader constructs from textual clues, literary knowledge and imagination, may be very different from the real person; the term ‘implied author’ therefore attempts to distinguish between the author as a person, and the image of the author constructed by the reader and/or implied by the text.

The ideal relationship between author and reader therefore relies on a match between their attitudes and values. The terms implied author and implied reader are

useful therefore in that they assume this ideal relationship while yet allowing us to discuss the potential mismatch between actual authors and actual readers. I will retain the terms throughout the discussion therefore in order to emphasise that both are constructs.

We can further extend Booth's categories to incorporate differences between implied author and implied reader resulting from historical, social, political, racial and sexual factors, for example, all of which could usefully highlight differences between actual authors and actual readers. It would be reasonable to assume that Atwood's implied reader, for example, would share, or at least be sympathetic to, her feminist views, and that the narrator, Offred, is partly a mouthpiece, allowing Atwood to express those views. Our knowledge about the author thus allows us to 'project or reconstruct back from the text, some sort of version or picture of the author' (Toolan, 1988:78). However, as Toolan notes, although the term implied author allows for the possibility that our impression of the author may not be shared by others, nor by the author, it is not a 'role' as such in the reading relationship (ibid.). Unlike the role of narrator, for example, to be discussed in Chapter Three, the distinction is useful in theoretical, rather than real, terms. While the implied reader's perception of the implied author may affect response to the text on the 'decoding' side, (Toolan, 1988:78), it is not a distinct position on the 'encoding' side. In this respect, the concept of an implied author is more relevant to the reader's response than to the author's act of communication.

The potential for the message to reach a reader who is not ideal is illustrated by *The Handmaid's Tale*; Offred has to allow for the fact that her message may be received by a man, who, even if sympathetic, cannot fully understand her experiences.

[...] if you happen to be a man, sometime in the future, and you've made

it this far, please remember: you will never be subjected to the temptation of feeling you must forgive, a man, as a woman.

(Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p. 144)

Offred's address to a male reader illustrates the potential gap between actual readers and implied readers; as a woman addressing other women, Offred can assume a common understanding which is not shared by someone who 'happens' to be a man. In addition, she assumes that her recipient shares similar world views and experiences as herself, which may not be the case 'sometime in the future'. In this respect, the implied reader, implied author, narrator and narratee are assumed to be similar in terms of the 'essential norms' which they share. The very different experiences of men and women characters in *The Handmaid's Tale* therefore serve to accentuate the differing experiences of men and women in some aspects in real life. Offred's actual (male) reader may understand, but not entirely share her experience ('you will never be subjected to the temptation of feeling you must forgive'). It becomes apparent therefore that the reader can occupy a position which varies in distance from that envisaged by the author. Of course, authors may write from an assumed stance which need not necessarily reflect their own views, or utilise a narrator whose 'norms' we would be reluctant to associate with the implied author. However, this is a role which is associated with the narrator rather than the implied author, as will be discussed in Chapter Three.

In addition, the reader can be positioned in varying degrees of intimacy from the author, yet is assumed to share her attitudes towards the characters and events. For example, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the authorial tone (Leech and Short, 1981:280) is intimate and conversational, and relies on an assumption (or pretension of an assumption) of shared knowledge of the society in which Offred lives, and shared sympathy for her plight. This makes the discovery of, and subsequent reaction to,

Offred's story a poignant postscript for the sympathetic reader, since the Handmaid's message falls into the hands of male 'experts' who discuss the document with inappropriate humour (Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.313). Rather than a contemporary female addressee who has shared similar experiences to herself, Offred's actual male audience is probably far removed from her imaginary ideal, and struggles to comprehend her message, as illustrated in the extract below.

Our author, then, was one of many, and must be seen within the broad outlines of the moment in history of which she was a part. But what else do we know about her, apart from her age, some physical characteristics that could be anyone's, and her place of residence? Not very much.

(Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.317)

The male experts place Offred's story within its historical context in an attempt to make sense of the events she describes. What is missing from their reception however is the ability to place themselves in her situation, or to make allowances for differences between her situation and their own in order to understand how she must have felt as she narrated her story. They are unable to 'eliminate the distance' between themselves and the time of writing, the changes effected by the lapse of time on people and the society in which they live (Leech and Short, 1981:259). To understand Offred's tale, the reader must be able to imagine him or herself in the future (or in the past in the case of the male experts), and imagine the drastic changes which women's roles in particular have undergone. Even then, sex differences may mean that men and women respond differently to Offred's message, since men have an additional task of having to imagine what it must be like to be female as well as living in an imaginary future. At one point in Atwood's novel, Offred encounters a group of female Japanese tourists who are not subject to the restrictions of her own life, and remembers a time when she too was free to dress how

she pleased. It is likely that (at least some of) Atwood's women readers will be able to relate to her thoughts more easily than will her male readers.

I'm looking down at the sidewalk, mesmerised by the women's feet. One of them is wearing open-toed sandals, the toenails painted pink. I remember the smell of nail polish, the way it wrinkled if you put the second coat on too soon, the satiny brushing of sheer pantyhose against the skin, the way the toes felt, pushed towards the opening in the shoe by the whole weight of the body. The woman with painted toes shifts from one foot to the other. I can feel her shoes, on my own feet. The smell of nail polish has made me hungry. (Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.39)

Although not all of Atwood's female readers will have experienced the sensation of painting toe-nails and wearing stockings and high heels, Atwood can assume that at least some will be able to relate to the description ('I can feel her shoes, on my own feet'). By contrast, the number of male readers who have had similar direct experiences will presumably be in the minority.

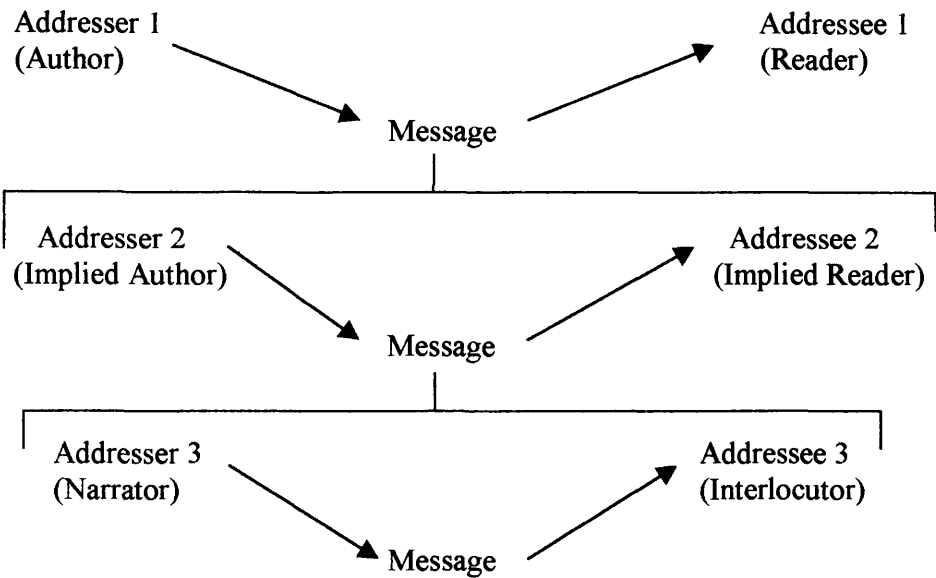
Sex differences are one difficulty with which an author is faced when attempting to 'eliminate the distance' between herself and the reader. Historical differences are also beyond the control of the author, and novels often have assumptions which may not be shared at a later date. An illustration of this is provided by Burney's *Evelina*, an epistolary novel published in 1778, the bulk of which is formed by Evelina's letters to her uncle, the Reverend Villars. The novel relates Evelina's adventures on entering society for the first time, where she commits a series of social gaffes which are presumably immediately apparent to Burney's contemporary reader. In the early part of the novel, Evelina attends a ball, and causes great offence by refusing one dance partner and subsequently accepting another, the height of bad manners.

A confused idea now for the first time entered my head, of something I had heard of the rules of assemblies; but I was never at one before, - I have only danced at school, - and so giddy and heedless I was, that I had not once considered the impropriety of refusing one partner, and afterwards accepting another. (Burney, *Evelina*, p.33)

Today's reader is probably grateful for Evelina's explanations describing her abrupt acquisition of the rules of dance. Allowing Evelina to narrate her own version of events through her letters has the potential to show her 'true' character, either innocent or ignorant, depending on the reader's interpretation. However, Evelina's description of her mortification also provides the modern reader (or uninformed contemporary reader) with the information necessary to enable us to assume the role of implied reader, a reader whose superior knowledge enables her or him to grasp earlier than Evelina herself the inadvertent rudeness which will be attributed to her behaviour.

I have discussed at some length the relationship between author and reader and implied author and implied reader to illustrate the fact that this relationship is assumed rather than definitive, and to show the potential for readers to occupy positions other than that envisaged by the author. In addition, I have alluded to the relationship between narrator and narratee, and have attempted to illustrate, by way of examples from *The Handmaid's Tale*, the way in which the relationship between implied author and implied reader is mirrored in the assumed relationship between narrator and narratee. The relationship between author and reader, and implied author and implied reader, is referred to by Leech and Short as the 'discourse structure' of fiction (1981:263), intended to reflect the hierarchical structuring of the communicative act and which they illustrate diagrammatically as follows;

Figure 1: Discourse Structure of Fiction

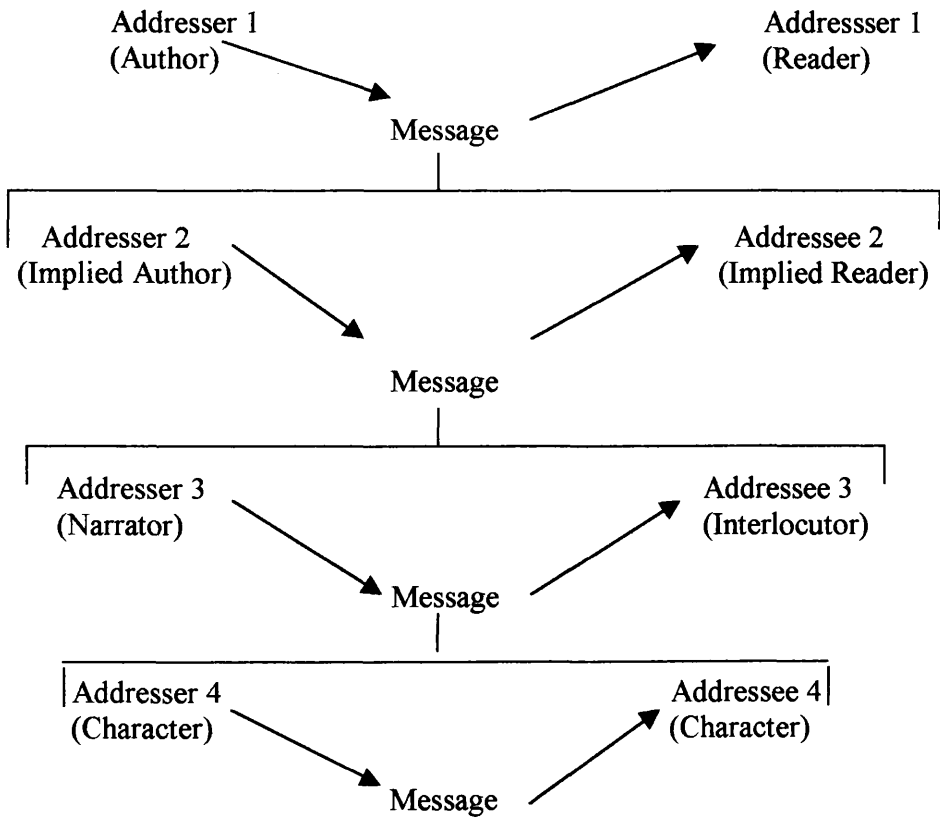


(Adapted from Leech and Short, 1981:269)

In the examples from *The Handmaid's Tale* discussed above, the narrator role is occupied by Offred and is distinct from that of implied author and author roles. As noted, in theoretical terms, it is useful to distinguish between author and implied author, although their roles are not distinct, unlike the roles of implied author and narrator, which are more easily distinguishable. The distinction between reader and implied reader has already been discussed and is the area of most concern for this thesis. The narrator/narratee level of communication, (or narrator/interlocutor, in Leech and Short's terms), allows for the possibility that the narrator may address the reader directly (as in the famous example from *Jane Eyre*, 'Reader, I married him', ch. 38), but equally may address her or his story to another character. In Burney's *Evelina*, discussed above, each of the characters narrate their own version of events through letters, and the message is addressed to the other characters in the novel, rather than to the implied reader. This aspect of discourse structure is also accounted

for in Leech and Short's diagram, introducing a fourth layer in which character addresses character (although in Leech and Short's example, the address is in the form of speech rather than writing).

Figure 2: Discourse Structure of Fiction, Character Dimension



The issue of the relationship between narrator and narratee, and between the characters, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three. My concern at this point is to problematize the issue of the relationship between the implied author and the implied reader, and the assumption that readers necessarily respond positively to a text as a result of the way in which a narrative is told. This is an assumption which forms the basis of the investigations discussed in Chapters Five and Seven.

The potential for resistance to, or rejection of, point of view due to a lack of fit between reader and implied reader has been alluded to, and is illustrated by Genette's

comment that there are always people ‘off to the side’ who ‘re-tell’ the narrative according to their own experience. Such potential is illustrated by the examples from *The Handmaid’s Tale*; the story is told from Offred’s point of view, but responses may vary if, for example, the reader is a man ‘sometime in the future’. Before discussing different narrative techniques and linguistic indicators of point of view in detail therefore, I will first consider some of the problems in the author/reader relationship highlighted by feminist scholars particularly, and which relate to the issue of implied author and implied reader.

2. 3 The Resisting Reader

As happens only too frequently in reception-theory work, the definition of the reader and the reader’s response is based almost entirely on the responses of the critic. (Mills, 1994:29)

Above I referred to the movement known as ‘reader-response’ theory, and argued that one of the problems connected with these writings is their lack of detailed linguistic analysis. The work of these critics is primarily theoretical, and as the quotation from Mills above indicates, notions about ‘the reader’ are informed by their own response. This is not unique to reader-response theory of course; the same can be said of all literary criticism, including, until recently, narrative theorists who claim that access to a character’s point of view leads inevitably to sympathy. These two elements, linguistic analysis, and investigation of the responses of real readers, are the missing ingredients which should enable us to assess more accurately the interaction between point of view and response. The work of feminist scholars is a first step, allowing us to consider the way in which readers can resist point of view. Similarly, I do not claim that my readings of the texts used to exemplify this discussion are the only way in which they can be read, only that this is how I interpret them.

In the quotation above, Mills is referring to the work of Fetterley (1978), whose notion of the 'resisting reader' stems from her readings of American male-authored fiction which, in her opinion, necessitates the adoption of a 'male' point of view by women readers. Mills' criticism of Fetterley is due to the latter's assumption that her own response will be shared by others, a criticism which is relevant to this thesis; as noted, there has been a tendency for some stylisticians in the past to assume an inevitable association between an internal point of view and reader sympathy (e.g., Booth 1961, Chatman 1978, to be discussed in Chapter Three). There is a danger that the theory thus becomes 'obvious' and self-fulfilling, in that we look for examples which confirm the theory based on our own interpretations. However some empirical work into reading and interpretation is now being undertaken, (Alderson and Short 1989, Fairley 1989, Mills 1994), although the relationship between reader response and textual manipulation of point of view has received minimal attention from the field of stylistics itself, and the majority of empirical studies into the effect of point of view on reading remain, so far, within the field of social psychology. These will be discussed in section 2.6 below.

Despite Mills' criticism, the work of Fetterley is suggestive, since she argues that many texts which constitute the literary canon reflect a male point of view which is problematic for women readers, who must read as if they are also male. Fetterley adopts Showalter's argument that women are 'immasculated';

women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one of whose central principles is misogyny.

(Fetterley, in Eagleton, 1986:304)

Alternatively, women readers can refuse to adopt the reading position assumed by the text to become a 'resisting reader'. Fetterley's resisting reader is thus someone who recognises and contests the 'reality' of texts, reading them critically to uncover

the male point of view presented in them. If Fetterley's argument now seems somewhat overstated, this is more a result of the success of feminism and feminist scholars who have done much to raise awareness of sexism and sexist language. Fetterley's work provides a starting point for investigating the possibility of differences among readers, and has been built upon by Mills, for example, whose contributions will be discussed next.

2. 4. Feminist Stylistics

In *Feminist Stylistics* (Mills, 1995), and elsewhere (Mills, 1992:192), Mills suggests that Fetterley's argument is somewhat simplistic, since it is based on a content analysis which does not illustrate the way in which language elements contribute to her identification of the reader as male. However, Fetterley's suggestion that readers can refuse to align themselves with the predominant point of view in fiction is suggestive and is elaborated upon in Mills' subsequent work (Mills, 1994, 1995). Mills' approach is determinedly political, using her analytical skills to foreground gender inequalities in general, but particularly within language. Before discussing her work in detail, it is necessary however to mention that of Burton, whose influence on Mills is acknowledged (Mills, 1995:17) and whose work is similarly focused on gender and language.

2. 4. (i) Burton

Burton's avowedly political approach is in response to the perceived 'objective' and 'neutral' nature of stylistics at that time (Burton, 1982:197). She argues that stylisticians should dispense with the notion of objectivity and foreground their own subjective stance and political objectives. Since, she argues, sexism is present in society and manifest in language, then analysis of this feature in texts can

enable readers both to be aware of, and to change, stereotypical attitudes based on gender.

It is clear that we live in a classist, racist and sexist society, and that is, at the very least, a highly unsatisfactory state of affairs.[...] of these three major and massive injustices, sexism is the most deep-rooted (psychologically), the most pervasive, the most difficult to perceive, the most resistant to change - yet available as a locus for important and essential radical impetus to the reorganisation of all the unequal and oppressive power-structures in our society. (Burton, 1982:197)

Although some might argue that classism and racism are still as deeply ingrained within some areas of society, and as manifest in language use as sexism, Burton's argument typifies the strand of feminism which insists that awareness of bias in language is a necessary precondition for effecting change in linguistic behaviour.² Burton provides an analysis of the transitivity patterns in Plath's *The Bell Jar* to show how the protagonist's powerlessness in relation to the medical staff who treat her is reflected in her use of language. Burton goes further to suggest that this powerlessness is symptomatic of the ability of language both to express 'reality' and to 'disenable' the user from visualising a different kind of existence, thus resulting in a predisposition to be unable to see herself other than as a 'helpless victim' (Burton, 1982:201). Stylistic analysis, Burton claims, can be used not only as a tool for analysing texts in detail, but can

[...] point the way to understanding the ways in which the language constructs the 'reality' of everyday life - and an awareness that it always *must* do so. So that, in a sense, everyday 'reality' can usefully be seen as a series of 'fictional' constructs - as texts open to analysis and interpretation in just the same way as texts marked for literary study are. (Burton, 1982:211 emphasis in original)

² The work of Cameron (1985, 1990) is another obvious example; however since the focus of this thesis is on readers' responses to a stylistic phenomenon, concentration on the work of those who use stylistic analysis is more relevant and necessary for the sake of brevity.

This is similar to Fetterley's notion of the resisting reader, the ability to recognise that the point of view reflected in texts is only one point of view, not the only point of view. Re-reading from a 'female' perspective those texts written from a 'male' point of view allows additional meanings to be uncovered, as is illustrated by the work of Mills, to be discussed below. Burton extends her argument to suggest that any 'texts' circulating throughout society can be analysed for signs of their ideology, thereby allowing the reader to agree with or challenge that 'reality'.

The concentration on stylistic analysis as a device for discovering the 'reality' of texts, and the way in which people perceive their role in society, is elaborated upon by Mills to produce what she terms a 'feminist stylistics'. By focusing on gender issues via stylistic analysis informed by feminism, Marxism, and critical discourse analysis, Mills aims to provide readers with a 'toolkit' which can be applied not only to literary works, but to a variety of texts, including, for example, advertisements, newspapers, and teaching materials (Mills, 1995). This is in keeping with Burton's suggestion that an awareness of the presence of gendered discourse is a precondition to resisting and attempting to change sexism in language.

The work of these feminist scholars thus throws new light on the notion of the implied author and implied reader relationship. Fetterley's argument, for example, illustrates the way in which her impression of the implied author allows her to resist the role of implied reader. Her perception that the majority of literature which she was obliged to read as part of the literary canon reflects a male point of view, allows her to argue that the implied reader is also male, and shares similar attitudes to the implied author about the world in general and women in particular. As a woman reader, Fetterley refuses to adopt the reading position reserved for her, or to allow herself to be assumed to share the views reflected in the text. The exposure of a predominantly

male world view in texts is elaborated upon by Burton, who argues that such a political objective should be extended to all aspects of life, and is subsequently used and developed by Mills to focus on a variety of texts circulating throughout society, as I will now consider.

2. 4 (ii) Mills: Subject Positions and Reading

Mills' work incorporates analyses of the linguistic elements of texts which allow her to identify the implied reader, and to suggest factors which may cause some readers to resist the address of the text. The most useful aspects of Mills' work for the purposes of this thesis fall into two main areas;

- 1. the construction of subject identities
- 2. frameworks for reading and feminist codes

The first of these is a generalised theory about the way in which people perceive their role in society, and which, Mills argues, affects the way in which we are addressed by texts and the way in which we respond to that address. The second category, relating to feminist codes and frameworks for reading, refer specifically to the way in which we read. The two aspects are considered together, although of course it is not necessarily the case that every reader's framework for reading will include knowledge of feminist codes. However, the importance of these two aspects should become clearer in my discussion of the empirical studies in Chapters Five and Seven. I will first consider points 1. and 2. in turn, before proceeding with a discussion of the insights into the reading process and characterisation which are provided from social psychology.

In *Feminist Stylistics*, Mills encourages readers to address various questions to a text in order to read 'suspiciously' (Mills, 1995:2). Although her work is not unique in this respect, since stylisticians are increasingly 'suspicious' and concerned with ideology in texts (e.g., Fowler, 1996, Simpson, 1993), her work is unusually

concerned with gender issues, specifically with the way in which women are addressed by, or represented in, texts, although her 'toolkit' can be used to investigate language bias of any kind. Mills insists that gender 'always makes a difference' to reading and interpretation, irrespective of the genre under analysis, and that gender becomes crucial when considering the target audience of texts. This is an aspect which has already been discussed at some length under the relationship between implied author and reader.

Mills adopts Fairclough's suggestion that members of a society have a store of accumulated shared knowledge or 'members resources'.

[...] rather than the meaning being located within the text, meaning can now be seen to be more of a negotiation between assumed knowledge or members' resources which the author posits that the reader will take for granted. (Mills, 1995:34/35)

This is not a new idea; Fish, for example, posits the notion of the 'interpretive community', stressing the role of the reader not only as an individual, but as a member of a community which is predisposed to create meanings as a result of shared beliefs and values (Fish, 1980). Mills' work however stresses her perception of the prior importance of gender, arguing that women and men read differently, a point to which I will return in section 2.6 below.

Mills argues that the reading strategies available to readers are more complex than the straightforward acceptance or rejection which Fetterley suggests. Rather, texts provide readers with a variety of subject positions in relation to which they can negotiate their own reading position. Readers first recognise a

dominant reading position (or positions) which the text offers or proffers to the reader within a particular historical moment, because of the range of ideological positions which make that text understandable. (Mills, 1995:73)

In common with Fetterley's 'resisting reading', Mills designates a 'space from which female readers can read against the grain' (1992:193), an idea which can,

naturally, be extended to include any reader who recognises but resists the 'dominant' reading. Mills adopts and elaborates upon the Althusserian notion of 'interpellation' to suggest ways in which texts allow readers to negotiate subject positions in relation to the ideas which are expressed. Simply stated, interpellation refers to the way in which people are constituted as 'subjects' within society, accepting and recognising their designated role.

individuals are called into a position of subjecthood: when you recognize your role/s in society, you become a subject in both senses of the word: you are a subject in that you are an individual psyche, and you are also subject to the state and authority. (Mills, 1995:67/8)

The state and authority are represented by the 'repressive state apparatuses', which include the armed forces, police etc. These are distinct from the 'ideological state apparatuses' (hereafter ISAs) of the media and education, which 'reproduce the conditions of production within a society' and 'achieve this aim through a constant barrage of images and information which maps out the role of the subject'. (Mills, 1995:67). The ISAs are the forces most often referred to in feminist writings, with particular emphasis on the way in which women perceive their roles as 'mapped out' for them in advertising and women's magazines. The reader recognizes the role implied by the text and recognises herself 'as the imaginary self that the text constructs' (Mills, 1994:25). Such aspects are particularly important in advertising; the reader recognises her 'imaginary self' in, for example, a magazine image of a female model, and seeks to emulate that image through the purchase of cosmetics or beauty products which the image promotes. The recognition and acceptance of subject roles suggests therefore that individuals are partly responsible for their own interpellation:

In this way, you are forced to mis/recognise the imaginary (i.e. ideological) conditions of your relation to the means of production. Althusser states that interpellation or hailing is one of the mechanisms whereby this is achieved; he

gives the much-cited and maligned example of a police officer in the street calling 'Hey you'. In the process of turning round, the individual has recognised not only her/himself as an individual who may be guilty of something, but also as a subject in relation to a position of authority. Thus, interpellation constructs the subject into a role or position in the very act of hailing it. (Mills, 1994:25)

The notions of 'guilt' and 'authority' are particularly relevant to the genre of advertising; recognising herself as 'inadequate' in some way for failing to live up to an 'ideal', the reader may seek to redress the balance by purchasing the product being advertised. In this respect, the magazine image or advertiser assumes an authoritative role which articulates the ideal which women must emulate in order to assume the role implied by the text. Just as Burton argues that language poses a restriction to envisaging a different kind of reality, so interpellation as described by Althusser seems to restrict the way in which people are able to visualise their role in society. However, Mills argues that our relationship to our social role is more complex than that suggested by Althusser, since there is not one, but a number of conflicting roles available to us. Consequently, Mills claims that texts offer a number of different 'subject positions' which the reader can choose to adopt or resist, thus suggesting a more complex relationship than the one posited by Fetterley.

There is an unending series of hailings both direct and indirect, to which the reader responds or does not respond. (Mills, 1994:25)

Mills compares this to Montgomery's work on D.J. talk (Mills, 1992:187); some members of a radio audience are subject to direct address, whereas others are placed in the position of 'overhearer' of the conversation and are thus addressed only indirectly, an idea which Mills adopts to illustrate the relationship of readers to texts.

[...] when interpellated by a text, the reader can adopt either the position of the supposed speaker or the role of the supposed addressee, or can be positioned as an overhearer of the action [...] (Mills, 1992:186)

Thus the implied reader of the toe-nail description in *The Handmaid's Tale* discussed in section 2.2 above adopts the role of the supposed speaker, i.e., Offred, and is also able to 'feel her shoes' on her own feet. It is apparent however that readers may be more responsive to some parts of a text than to others, since it is possible to resist some elements of narrative and accept others, as I will argue below in my discussion of ideological point of view in Chapter Three. There are therefore some problems with outlining only these three roles (speaker, addressee, overhearer), since reading positions may vary in degree, from chapter to chapter, may change over time or on subsequent readings for example.

Mills argues that gender is the main factor which influences the way in which readers respond to a textual message, and again, the analogy with D.J. talk is illustrative. Messages addressed to specific people or subsections of the audience have the effect of excluding others who are, nevertheless, able to 'overhear' and respond to the message indirectly. The discussion of the implied reader highlighted the need for readers to be able to assume the role implied by the text. In the case of *The Handmaid's Tale* for example, this may also necessitate the ability to imagine ourselves in the role of the 'supposed speaker', the first-person narrator, Offred, in this instance. The implied reader is assumed to be able to 'see' events from Offred's point of view, in order to occupy the ideal reading role. The analogy with D.J. talk can also explain the potential for readers to be unable to assume totally the position of addressee. The male reader of Offred's story, is an example; rather than an implied reader, he is in the role of 'overhearer'; the eventual recipients of Offred's message are not those envisaged by her.

However, the data which Mills offers to support her argument are somewhat unsatisfactory. She adopts the idea of interpellation to interpret the responses of male

and female participants to a poem, Fuller's *Valentine*. Discussing the differing reactions of male and female students, (amusement and anger respectively), Mills suggests that this apparently innocuous poem takes on a more sinister tone when a 'resisting reading' is adopted (Mills, 1992:195). She examines the ways in which the speaker of the poem is assumed to be male, thus refusing a female reader any reading position other than that of the female addressee, i.e., the dominant reading of the poem. Male readers, by contrast, will presumably adopt the role of supposed speaker, hence their amusement at the superficially innocuous tone of the male 'voice'. By describing the language elements connected with the ideology of romantic love, Mills shows how it is possible to 'make strange' the seemingly 'obvious' connections between love and violence, to produce a reading which resists this ideology and the subject position offered by the text. These elements can only be read as coherent if

they are positioned within a discourse of romantic love, and if the reader indirectly assents to them as 'obvious'. (Mills, 1992:204)

Although Mills suggests that reactions to the poem are polarised according to gender differences, and that her own reaction is shared by those of other female readers, no other empirical data are offered to illustrate her claims. It would be useful to explore the reactions of male readers to a poem which utilises a female speaker or persona, for example. In addition, she does not consider the possibility that female readers may also be able to adopt the position of the supposed speaker, i.e., woman to woman, or male readers that of addressee, by ignoring those elements which refer to biological differences (e.g., 'I'd like to make you reproduce', Mills, 1992:197). The concentration on gender as the only distinguishing feature at the expense of sexual orientation, for example, or simply the ability to imagine oneself in a role which does not coincide with biological sex, impoverishes Mills' argument. In addition, Mills'

own studies have shown how important the predisposition to read as/like a feminist is on response (Mills, 1994), as will be discussed in section 2.6 below. Bearing this in mind, there is a possibility that awareness of Mills' own political views may predispose some female students to also produce resisting readings of the poem.

Although Mills highlights important factors which need to be taken into account in a consideration of readers' responses to point of view, namely the effect of gender on the reader's relationship to the subject position offered by the text, and his or her acceptance or rejection of its ideology, it is important to recognise that gender is not the only factor in our responses. While the suggestion that the reader can adopt an alternative position to the one offered by the text is suggestive, Mills' argument suffers from the assumption that mismatches between implied reader and actual reader are always a result of sex differences. Resistance to a point of view can result equally as well from cultural factors, for example, as is illustrated in the case of the Creole writer Rhys. Her response to Brontë's *Jane Eyre* was to re-write events from the point of view of Rochester's first wife, for whom she apparently felt sympathy and a sense of identification. Rhys' resistance to the 'reality' represented in the original text, and specifically, to the representation of Bertha Rochester as a mad woman, is evidence both of her recognition of the dominant reading, and the lack of fit between herself and the implied reader. In addition, her resistance is irrespective of shared gender between herself and the first-person narrator, as the comments below illustrate.

Of course Charlotte Brontë makes her own world, of course she convinces you, and that makes the poor Creole lunatic all the more dreadful. I remember being quite shocked and rather annoyed. "That's only one side of the story - the English side" sort of thing. (Rhys, quoted by Athill, 1989:vii, *Wide Sargasso Sea*)

In this respect, Rhys' response is indicative of the role of overhearer; Brontë's 'Englishness' allows Rhys to infer that the implied reader of *Jane Eyre* is also

English, and shares Bronte's view of West Indian women. Her apparent feeling of exclusion forces her into the role of overhearer, causing Rhys to recuperate Bertha's viewpoint and resist Jane's. Athill notes that,

Jane had been created with all the sober virtues which Jean Rhys considered specially English. Knowing that she herself lacked most of these virtues, she chose to hate them. (Athill, 1989:viii, *Wide Sargasso Sea*)

It is obviously not always the case therefore that gender is the determining factor in response; cultural differences are apparently a more important factor in Rhys' response to *Jane Eyre*. Feminists are increasingly wary of differentiating among readers only on the basis of sex differences, since this assumes that gender identities are fixed and stable, and that the terms 'male' and 'female' are binary opposites, rather than relational terms³. By concentrating primarily on gender issues, Mills runs the risk of being criticised for the solipsism often levelled at Western feminisms, although she does note that women may have 'other affiliations such as class and race' (Mills, 1992:194). As Spelman notes

It is theoretically significant for any feminist analysis of gender and of sexism if statements that appear to be 'true' about "men and women" clearly aren't true when we specify that we are talking about men and women of different classes or races. (Spelman, 1988:80)

Spelman notes that, as a white woman, she need not use the term 'white' to refer to herself. By contrast, a black woman who does not refer to herself as black would be accused of failing to disclose important information about herself (Spelman, 1990:96). Such issues illustrate the problems of assuming that gender identity is the only and most important way in which we perceive our position in society.

Potential differences between implied author and implied reader are further exemplified by Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*. Schreiner acknowledges

potential differences between herself and her reader implicitly in this novel by enclosing words which are assumed to be unfamiliar to the implied reader in quotation marks; for example, 'karoo', 'kopje', and 'sheep-kraals' (Schreiner, *Story of an African Farm*, p.35 - the extract referred to is quoted in full in section 3.5, and is discussed in relation to spatial and ideological point of view). While providing no explanation of these words, Schreiner acknowledges potential differences in shared knowledge between herself and her implied reader, the quotation marks serving to separate non-English words from the remainder of the text for the benefit of the non-South-African reader. In Booth's terms, Schreiner attempts to 'eliminate the distance' between herself and her reader. By contrast, certain words which are also non-English, e.g. 'Kaffir' and 'Boer', are not separated in the same way, and are presumably assumed to be familiar. By implication, the implied reader will know that 'Kaffir' refers to the indigenous black South Africans and 'Boer' to the white Dutch settlers, and will therefore infer something about the characters and the relationship between them. Such inferences can only be made on the basis that the reader knows something about South African history and culture, even though the novel does not deal specifically with issues of race relations. It would therefore be expected that quotation marks would be unnecessary for South-African readers. However, in his introduction to the novel, Jacobus quotes from its beginning to comment on the novelty of descriptions of African landscapes in fiction, something previously unknown.

[...] when I read her novel for the first time, some sixty years after it was first published, I had to struggle with my own incredulity that the kopjes, *kraals* and cactus plants she mentions were of the same kind as those I was familiar with; so little experience had I had of encountering them within the pages of a book. (Introduction to Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, p.18)

³ Kolodny has been criticised for her reading of *The Yellow Wallpaper* on the same basis; Dimock (1995: 123) argues that the latter uses gender as a 'principle of reification', speaking of 'male texts' and 'female meaning' as if they were 'discrete and substantive terms.'

In terms of the implied reader, it would be expected that Jacobus would have more in common with the implied author than might a non-South-African reader, and this is true in respect of his familiarity with the descriptive vocabulary. However, his comments illustrate a further element, namely, the role of convention in reading, the way in which familiarity with certain genres can help the reader to understand the fiction. Despite his apparent familiarity with South African landscapes and the words to describe it, Jacobson found the experience of reading such descriptions novel and unfamiliar. While he could relate the description to his personal experience, he lacked a literary frame of reference. This brings me to the remaining two areas of Mills' work which are of relevance to this research, namely the issues of frameworks for reading and feminist codes. The two are discussed together, due to the fact that the discussion centres on Mills' empirical data produced from readers' responses to a feminist poem. For this reason, the issue of feminist codes is inextricably linked to the framework which (some) readers construct as an aid to interpretation, and which is not necessarily the case with other readers or readings of other texts, as will be discussed below.

2. 4 (iii) Feminist Codes and Frameworks for Reading

Mills 'suspicious' reading of Fuller's *Valentine* poem discussed above is a result of her exposure to feminist writings such as those of Fetterley and Burton, and allows her to suggest that feminist readers are more similar to one another than to readers who are not feminist. The predisposition to be aware of certain codes or to recognise textual cues suggests a more 'direct' relationship between the feminist author and feminist reader, (i.e., between implied author and implied reader), than between the same author and a non-feminist reader. The feminist reader, Mills argues, has additional member's resources due to her (or his) ability to recognise certain themes which are familiar.

[...] not only is there the construction of a shared knowledge between the text and the reader [...] but there may be a code or private language which is being developed between the feminist text and the feminist audience, where it is assumed that the reader will be able to decode the language [...] Feminist writing may be considered that writing which contains clear signals to the reader that certain knowledge is shared. (Mills, 1994:31)

Again, this is not a new insight; Culler argues similarly that readers acquire knowledge of the codes and conventions which are necessary in order to read, becoming competent in interpreting texts due to their familiarity with other texts (Culler, 1983). However, Mills argues for a distinction between, what might be termed 'ordinary' readers, and those who read as/like a feminist;

[...] the degree to which you identify yourself as a feminist plays a significant role in the way that you read. (Mills, 1994:34)

There may be differences between men and women readers in this respect, since reading 'like' a feminist is a reading strategy which men and women alike can adopt, whereas reading 'as' a feminist is more likely to be a specifically female activity. In addition, reading 'as' a feminist is a reading strategy which may be more or less apparent, may be at variance with the feminism evident in the text, or may be absent altogether.

Similarly, while it is possible for readers to read 'like' a woman or man, 'acting out a particular reading position', this is distinct from reading 'as' a woman or man, which 'assumes that you *are* that particular gender position' (Mills, 1994:33). For women who are also feminists there may be a closer relationship between the implied author of feminist fiction and the implied reader, who *is* a feminist, and does not have to assume that position. In order to investigate the extent to which these differences may affect reading responses, Mills asked readers to complete questionnaires illustrating their responses to a poem whose subject matter was

menstruation, pregnancy and witchcraft; due to its topic, she felt that it ‘seemed to be indirectly addressing a female/feminist reader’ (Mills, 1994:35).

Most of Mills’ informants were able to recognise the ‘dominant’ reading of the poem, yet there appeared to be sex differences in response. Mills claims that men tried to ‘universalize’ its meaning, whereas women related it to their personal experience.

Women readers

[...] recognized the subject position proffered by the text and either gained pleasure from identifying a closeness between that position and themselves, or they rejected the position. Male readers seemed in a more difficult position, where their pleasure in the poem was not related to their recognition of subject positions. (Mills, 1994:39)

Mills offers no information about why some of the women rejected the subject position offered by the poem. However, Mills’ comment that the men’s responses were unrelated to their recognition of subject positions at first seems odd. For example, there is no evidence to suggest that male readers are unable to adopt Jane’s subject position in *Jane Eyre* and read ‘like’ women, just as Fetterley argues that women have frequently had to read ‘like’ men. It is more likely therefore that it is the *topic* of the poem which is responsible for differences between the men and women readers in Mills’ study. It is evident that the differing experiences of men and women on such topics of menstruation and childbirth are inevitably going to produce different types of response, and it is perhaps not surprising that the men were apparently unable to respond to the poem on a ‘personal’ level, and commented on the unusual nature of the subject matter. Therefore, although Mills’ work is useful in that it demonstrates that there are a variety of potential subject positions offered by a text, and incorporates the notion of ideology to suggest the ways in which readers are presented with the ‘obviousness’ of social roles, the empirical data which are used to support her claim that men and women read differently are less convincing. The findings are

disappointing and perhaps predictable, given the nature of the subjects discussed by the poem.

In addition, Mills argues that the speaker in the poem addresses a female audience, yet this does not appear to be borne out by the responses of the men. Their comments, Mills claims, are attempts to 'universalize' its meaning since it poses difficulties for them in terms of subject position. However, the poem may be compared to the situation found in first-person narratives; the speaking 'I' details her thoughts and feelings about menstruation and pregnancy, which does not necessarily preclude the male readers from understanding her experience. It may be more useful to investigate differing responses from men and women in relation to aspects of social life which are shared between us.

However, the fact that there are differences in response among the female readers is more revealing. The majority of the women thought the poem was feminist, while the majority of the men thought that it was not. Mills argues that the women's interpretation of the poem as 'feminist' is a result of their recognition of a code which predisposes them to read it in this way, since menstruation and pregnancy are common subjects in feminist writing. The theme of biological differences from the angle of celebration or complaint is an area which is probably more familiar to some women than to some men, leading to differences in interpretation between these readers and others. Thus the unexpectedness of the subject material was only apparent in the responses of those readers who were unfamiliar with 'feminist' topics. However, the men differ in their perception of the poem, arguing that the theme can be extended to incorporate other areas of experience with which anyone can identify, and which are not exclusively feminist (Mills, 1994:38/9).

Since the questionnaire consisted of a number of fairly closed questions, the informants were limited in the range of possible responses. Mills suggests that

Male readers sometimes seem to be put in an uncomfortable position by texts which are written overtly for women, since they assume that the address does not include them, unlike the seemingly universal masculine address.

(Mills, 1995:33)

Yet, anecdotal evidence suggests that men do not have difficulty in reading texts by which they are not directly addressed, women's magazines, for example. By contrast, there are many genres which employ technical jargon which do exclude the non-initiated reader, for example, those which discuss computing, mountaineering, classical music, DIY, or any which are addressed to specific sections of the population. Again this suggests that it is not only gender which influences response, but that experience and training are important factors.

Mills suggests that the differences among female readers themselves is a consequence of feminist politics (or lack of it) on interpretation, resulting from the distinction between those who read only (!) as women and those who read as/like feminists. The classification of the poem as 'feminist' by the women suggests that their responses may be related to their familiarity with such themes, causing them to apply a framework for reading which is partially informed by feminist writing. This is sometimes referred to as a 'narrative schema', and Mills suggests that such a schema helps to explain why certain ideas are familiar and recognisable, triggering a response to certain 'codes' (e.g., menstruation), which may explain the women's claims that the poem is feminist. (Such aspects are further considered in my discussion of schema theory in section 2. 6 (i).

The very mention of menstruation in this poem as 'woman's blood' and the questioning of the need for pregnancy seemed to constitute for the majority of the female readers a 'code' that the poem was feminist and that it was directed at a female audience. (Mills, 1995:37)

Such ‘codes’ will be picked up by some readers and not others according to the schemata available to them, and may account for the men’s response that the poem is not feminist. There is no reason why men cannot read ‘like’ feminists however, and it is strange that this predisposition is absent in the men’s responses, given the awareness of feminist writings in academic teachings. It is also not inevitable that a feminist poem only addresses a female audience, as is illustrated by the way in which feminist ideas have been appropriated by some gay male readers.⁴

The discussion so far has focused on the relationship between implied author and implied reader, and has noted the potential for resistance to a text due to a mismatch between the reader and the implied reader. The possibility for resistance to the reading position offered by a text has been illustrated by my discussion of the work of feminist scholars. However, I have noted some criticisms, namely the lack of attention to linguistic detail in the work of Fetterley for example, and Mills’ concentration on gender as the primary factor which distinguishes among readers. The two areas which are the concern of this thesis, namely the relationship between text (i.e., point of view) and the responses of real readers, so far remain separate. Before discussing point of view issues in detail, (the textual dimension) I will consider some of the empirical work which has been undertaken (the reader dimension).

2. 5 Frameworks for Reading, Empirical Evidence: Fairley and Radway.

It is useful to compare Mills’ study with that conducted by Fairley (1989). Fairley’s informants were also undergraduates, but unlike Mills, Fairley focused on

⁴ Kostenbaum, for example, describes his reading of Wilde as ‘male feminist criticism’, (Bennett, 1995:165).

the effect of literary training on reading strategies rather than on gender. Fairley comments that the reading practices of 'inexperienced' readers are often neglected in discussions of reading, in favour of the knowledge of the 'interpretive conventions' which the ideal or experienced reader is assumed to possess. She notes that

Language influences reading and interpretation only when readers are already sensitive to the types of structures that 'operate' in literary texts.
(Fairley, 1989:293/4)

Knowledge of reading conventions which can be drawn upon by experienced readers may be deficient or absent in the case of inexperienced readers. Fairley asked undergraduate students to complete a questionnaire detailing their responses to Plath's poem, *Mushrooms*. She subsequently divided the students into two groups according to whether they read on a 'literal' or a 'figurative' level (Fairley, 1989: 303). The first group, the 'literal' readers, read 'referentially', i.e., they saw the poem as a nature poem about mushrooms. The second group found a deeper level of meaning which, Fairley argues, stems from their application of a set of 'interpretive conventions' which they had learned and which provided an aid to interpretation. Such conventions involve, among other things, reading for intertextuality, for coherence and unity, for metaphors, and for contradictions (Fairley, 1989: 299), aspects which were missing from the literal readers' responses, who were however dissatisfied with their inability to resolve contradictions in the poem. Vocabulary which the literal readers could not understand was ignored, illustrating their expectations that a poem should be coherent, and their frustration that certain elements did not make sense.

Fairley thus concluded that there is a tendency for experienced readers to read for 'themes of human significance, of universal interest or applicability' (ibid.), a suggestion which can be related to the responses of the male participants in Mills' study. Their attempts to 'universalize' the meaning of the poem is something which

Fairley suggests is common to experienced readers, and a factor which allows them to 'organize specific details under a generalization' (Fairley, 1989:314). It is possible that the male and female readers in Mills' study were applying a slightly different set of conventions, or, more accurately, a set of conventions which focus on different aspects. The predisposition to look for evidence of 'human significance' may be amended to incorporate the idea that the presence of feminist codes such as 'women's blood', cue some readers into a script connected with women's experiences, a reductive reading in some respects. Fairley's comment that some readers 'know what to look for' (Fairley, 1989:294) can also apply to readers familiar with 'what to look for' in writing considered to be feminist. By contrast, the men can apply the convention that poetry always 'means something other than it says' (Culler, 1981:41) to produce an interpretation in terms of universal experiences. One male reader in Mills' study comments that the feeling of 'being trapped in one's body' (Mills, 1994:38-9) is not a specifically female experience, a comment which suggests the ability to transform the subject matter of the poem into a metaphor with universal application. The suggestion that readers acquire sets of conventions with which to interpret texts can explain the differing responses of the men and women, and the feminist and non-feminist readers in Mills' study, just as Fairley uses this concept to explain differences between literal and figural readers in hers.

Also relevant to the discussion at this point is Radway's study of women readers of romance fiction (Radway, 1984). Radway's intention was to look at the 'relationship between audiences and texts' using the notion of 'interpretive communities' (Radway, 1984:8) in a shift of focus from an ideal reader to empirical research on actual readers. For the readers in Radway's study, familiarity with the genre led them to have certain expectations. For example, the stories could be

expected to be ‘chronicles of female triumph’ featuring an ‘intelligent and able heroine who finds a man who recognises her special qualities’ (Radway, 1984:54). The stories also seem to incorporate the idea that ‘female independence and marriage are compatible rather than mutually exclusive’ (ibid.). Radway also discovered that pleasure in the genre is due in part to its ‘therapeutic value’, since romance reading offers a form of escapism as a result of the predictably happy ending (Radway, 1984:73). The readers’ familiarity with the genre and the conventions of the romance allowed them to relax in the certain knowledge that the female protagonist’s difficulties would be temporary, and would in fact make the happy ending even more satisfying. Seen in this way, romantic fiction and feminist fiction offer alternative ways of viewing relationships between the sexes, since feminist writing frequently concentrates on the *inability* of female characters to achieve independence within marriage. Examples such as *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *The Awakening* are frequently taught texts which illustrate the theme of ‘marriage as prison’. The female protagonist’s only ‘escape’ is through suicide or madness, in an inversion of the traditional happy-ever-after romance. Both types of text are, however, dependent on the recognition of a common plot structure, but with differently oriented narrative schemata, which will be activated whenever texts dealing with male/ female relationships are encountered. The conventions of romance and its feminist alternative are exploited by Atwood in *Lady Oracle*; the narrator is a romance writer, whose own unhappy experiences of relationships increasingly affect her ability to write, and result in her inability to produce a happy ending.

There, standing on the threshold, waiting for her, was Redmond. She was about to throw herself into his arms, weeping with relief, when she noticed an odd expression in his eyes. Then she knew. Redmond was the killer. He was a killer in disguise, he wanted to murder her as he had murdered his other wives. (Atwood, *Lady Oracle*, p.342)

Although Fairley's work does not relate specifically to narrative schemata implied in the above discussion, it is apparent that a greater degree of familiarity with different types of reading will predispose readers to read in certain ways. The concept of narrative schemata *is* investigated in other empirical studies which are more firmly focused on the cognitive processes of reading, and which will be discussed in section 2. 7 (i). The discussion has thus moved from the earlier focus on the implied author/implied reader relationship, to focus on how specific 'interpretive communities' respond to the same textual elements. The studies of Mills and Fairley are similar in this respect, since they both suggest that literary training has an effect on response. In Mills' study, the apparent predisposition of feminist readers to produce feminist readings suggests that textual clues such as 'women's blood' trigger a predictable response. The men's reading for universality suggests the activation of different schemata, which may be compared to Fairley's figural readers, namely that poetry is expected to 'mean something other than it says'. Both studies provide evidence for the activation of narrative schemata as an aid to reading; the differing frameworks for reading of the feminists and non-feminist readers in Mills' study, or of the inexperienced or experienced readers in Fairley's study, suggest the importance of such frameworks in interpretation. For this reason, I will consider in section 2. 6 further empirical work which has been conducted into reading.

The discussion so far has concentrated mainly on gender and training as potentially influential factors in determining reader response. The discussion of the concept of narrative schemata however, introduces a new area for consideration and widens the focus of concern. Gender and training may be seen as relating to two aspects of reading 'frameworks', the personal and the literary. We do not rely only on our familiarity with certain kinds of texts to interpret stories, but may relate fictional

experiences to events which take place in real life. Studies into the effect of real life experience on reading suggest that this kind of mapping may result in a more intense relationship with the text as will be discussed next.

2. 6 Interaction between Personal Experience and Literary Training

While the review of feminist works above proves suggestive in its ability to demonstrate that readers can adopt resistant or alternative reading positions, the reasons why we might do so are multiple. Seilman and Larsen (1989) found that readers' positive judgements of literature were often based on its degree of verisimilitude. They argue that we have a 'script' for reading which is combined with remembrances of personal experiences. The notion of scripts and frames is adopted from the work of Schank and Abelson (1977) on artificial intelligence, the potential for teaching computers to recognise literary texts, and will be discussed further below in section 2. 7 (i).

General knowledge like scripts and frames may provide some background for experiencing a literary story to be true to conceivable experience - to have verisimilitude. (Seilman and Larsen, 1989:167)

Seilman and Larsen claim that the perception of verisimilitude is closely linked with the reader's involvement, since fiction is seen to be 'deeply relevant and personally meaningful' if it 'elicits a personal resonance in the reader' (Seilman and Larsen, 1989:167). They stress the potential for literature to provide 'vicarious fulfilment of latent wishes' (Seilman and Larsen, 1989:168) supporting Radway's findings in her survey of romance readers. The 'wish-fulfilment' element of romantic fiction and the obligatory happy ending provide the escapism necessary for an enjoyable reading experience, and contrasts with more usual (and less predictable) real-life experiences.

Seilman and Larsen, following Schank (1982) use the term ‘reminders’ to refer to those instances where the text elicits a memory of a personal experience. In their account there are three different categories of ‘reminders’; those in which the reader is a ‘participating actor’ in events; those in which the reader is a ‘non-participating observer’; and those in which events are ‘reported to the reader’ (Seilman and Larsen, 1989:171). They also found that literary and expository texts elicited different responses. Readers were more likely to be reminded of experiences in which they were the ‘actor’ in events when presented with a literary text than with an expository text, leading Seilman and Larsen to suggest that

Literature seems to connect particularly with knowledge that is personal in the sense that one is an agent, a responsible subject interacting with one’s environment. (Seilman and Larsen, 1989:174)

The literary text specifically reminded readers of experiences in which they were active participants, whereas the expository text reminded readers of experiences in which they were merely passive recipients of information. Reminders were also more apparent at the beginning of reading, supporting the idea that readers first construct a ‘framework of understanding’ to aid interpretation (Seilman and Larsen, 1989:175). Although not dealing specifically with narrative point of view, Seilman and Larsen suggest that this is an area which invites further research in order to investigate the validity of their contention that

[...] passages with an inside point of view invite the reader to share the perspective of a character, and thus summon reminders from the reader’s personal information. (Seilman and Larsen, 1989:176)

Their comments are of relevance to the findings of Mills’ study; the male readers presumably lacked the reminders of personal experience which were available to the women, and constructed a ‘universal’ framework which allowed them to interpret the poem in terms of human significance. These differing personal

frameworks, when combined with differing narrative frameworks (i.e., knowledge of feminist codes) work together to produce different readings. This suggestion is supported by the findings of Halasz, (1991) who conducted a similar study into the effect of reminders evoked by literary and scientific texts. Halasz suggests that the concept of *similarity* is important in reminders, irrespective of whether the text elicits reminders of other texts or actual experiences. While Seilman and Larsen's discussion stresses the importance of reminders when reading literary texts and the apparent absence of reminders during the reading of expository texts, such reminders may not be limited to personal experience, but may equally be related to experiences of other similar texts.

The similarity which directs and generates reminders goes beyond the thematic level; it is based on how secondary sources relate to primary ones. While processing a literary text as a specific discourse, the reader relies not only upon his/her reminders coming from personally experienced, everyday life events directly, but significantly upon the discourse interwoven with FICTION experienced earlier. (Halasz, 1991:259)

Halasz comments that one of the stories used in his study is by Kafka and is presented in the first person, but suggests that this is insufficient to guarantee empathy with the protagonist, due to the 'enigmatic metaphorical character of the text' used in the study (Halasz, 1991:265). However, Halasz maintains that the reader's ability to relate to the character is dependent on 'his/her ability to relate to the protagonist's reaction'.

the cues of a literary text which arouse empathy also activate self-relevant information processing resulting in multiple consequences. The reader relies upon his own references as standards. (Halasz, 1991:266)

The question still remains however as to how the relative factors of literary training and personal experience interact.

Another study which has relevance for this research is that of Andringa (1990), who found that found that 'sophisticated or professional readers were less likely to

give away their emotions as spontaneously' as other readers (Andringa, 1990:248), supporting the claim that literary training may interfere with reaction to texts.

'Sophisticated' readers may suppress intuitive readings, or personal or potentially idiosyncratic responses, in favour of one which is more predictable or 'correct'.

Andringa's study discusses the effect of point of view on reading, but focuses on the effect of *not* having the point of view of one of the characters. The story used recounts the relationship between two brothers and a woman who was loved by both. Each man attempts to give up the woman for the sake of his brother; the eldest brother becomes the successful suitor due to his inability to stay away from her. The fact that the woman's point of view is never given was commented on by the readers and led to an 'angle of disapproval' for her, since she 'said or did nothing to express her own opinion' (Andringa, 1990:249). Andringa concluded that readers have certain expectations when reading, and that there is the perception of 'parallelism' between reality and story (Andringa, 1990:251). The fact that readers commented on the lack of information regarding the female character's viewpoint and viewed her with disapproval as a consequence is an important consideration, although Andringa does not offer any opinion on the cause, other than to state that

The very nature of the connection between negative response and the representation of perspectives [...] is not formulated explicitly.
(Andringa, 1990:249)

which is not particularly helpful. Andringa does imply however that the framework employed by readers includes the 'motives and intentions' of the characters (ibid:253), which suggests that the lack of insight into the female character's motives is an added factor in the readers' disapproval. This relates specifically to the assumption noted earlier, namely, that the insight into a character's mind results in understanding and sympathy, although empirical evidence for this is scarce.

The tendency for readers to look for characters' motives and intentions suggests that this may be an important factor in character evaluation. It is related to narrative point of view, since insights into a character's mind may result in sympathy or blame, depending on their motives, as will be discussed in section 2. 7 next.

2. 7 Insights from Social Psychology

The discussion so far has concentrated on author/reader, implied author/implied reader, and narrator/narratee relationships. The focus of this thesis is on the reader's response to point of view, and point of view obviously emanates from a source, either narrator and/or character. It is useful now therefore to consider this aspect of discourse structure before discussing the way in which point of view is identified. Our response to point of view is highly influenced by our perception of a character's 'personality', and information about the character and/or narrator allows the reader to judge that character in much the same way as we evaluate people in real life. For this reason insights from social psychology can prove useful for discussing the way that we respond to fictional characters, and therefore to the presentation of their point of view.

2. 7 (i) Schema Theory and Characterisation

Our perception and evaluation of characters will lead us to predict that they will behave in particular ways. While some might argue that we should not discuss fictional characters as if they are real people (e.g., Weinsheimer, 1979), it is apparent that we often *do* discuss them as if they are real. As Chatman notes;

That characters are indeed simply "people" captured somehow between the covers of books or by actors on stage and screen seems an unspoken axiom [...] (Chatman, 1978:108)

Chatman notes that from Aristotle through to the formalist and structuralist traditions, characters were often seen merely to be functional, secondary to the events

of the plot, with action being the most important aspect of a story (Chatman, 1978:108). The emphasis on plot at the expense of character is evident in Propp's analysis of the functional roles of characters in Russian folk tales for example; as Fiske notes, what they *do* is more important than what they *are* (Fiske on Propp, 1987:136). The emphasis on plot or character respectively may be compared to Forster's distinction between 'flat' and 'round' characters; flat characters are 'constructed round a single idea or quality', are highly predictable 'types' or 'caricatures' (Forster, 1974:73), whereas 'round' characters are 'capable of surprising in a convincing way' or 'acting out of character' (Forster, 1974:81).

In more complex modern novels however, personality is often as important as plot; characters are usually represented as complex bundles of personality traits which we interpret just as we interpret the people we meet in real life. Our interpretation of the 'behaviour' and 'personalities' of fictional characters utilises similar cognitive processes and may be described in a similar way. As Chatman notes;

When fictional characters are psychoanalysed as if they were real people, hard-nosed critics may be right to challenge the effort. But characters as narrative constructs do require terms for description, and there is no point in rejecting those out of the general vocabulary of psychology, morality, and any other relevant area of human experience. (Chatman, 1978:138)

For this reason, it is useful to consider the way in which we adopt a cognitive 'shorthand' in order to interpret people, a system of information processing which we also utilise in our interpretation of the 'personalities' and 'behaviour' of fictional characters. I have already alluded to the notion of a narrative schema (plural 'schemata') in section 2. 4 (ii) in my discussion of the role of frameworks for reading. A narrative schema refers to the reader's familiarity with particular topics, genres and themes, and refers to literary experience. The degree to which we recognise texts and compare them with other similar texts allows us to predict 'what will happen'. This is

an aspect of our literary experience which I discussed in relation to feminist themes in sections 2.4 and 2.5. In more general terms however, a schema is

generalized knowledge about a sequence of events. A schema, like the script of a play, has a cast of characters, a sequence of scenes, etc.
(Rumelhart, 1977:165)

The notion of schemata is most often associated with the realm of cognitive psychology and information processing. Based on our experiences, we build up a store of background knowledge and general expectations about people and events, which is activated whenever we encounter familiar situations. Just as our familiarity with types of texts may allow us to predict certain things, our information relating to everyday experiences are stored in schemata which allow us to recognise familiar situations with little effort. The notion of cognitive schemata explains how when we go into a restaurant, for example, we usually know what to expect, namely that we will enter, order a meal, eat and leave. The restaurant schema is typically associated with Schank and Abelson, (1977) who developed such ideas as simple schemata for use in computer programmes. Related to such schemata is the role of inferencing, i.e., we know that when we eat in a restaurant there will usually be a menu, that our order will be taken by a waiter or waitress, that we will have to pay the bill, and so on. Such highly predictable and familiar situations as these allow us to infer such information even when it is not stated explicitly.

Similar sorts of information processing explain our perception of people; we make use of a perceptual shorthand derived from our general knowledge about others, but which is often based on stereotypes. Our perception of the appearance of others and their social roles is used to produce a 'person' schema; for example, we anticipate that a doctor will exhibit a different set of personality traits than a student. However, stereotypes are potentially distorted and biased; we might assume that all nurses are

female, or that all students are young. My student schema, for example, predisposes me to imagine a person in their teens, radical, lively, environmentally friendly, and financially insolvent, a stereotype that more closely resembles my daughter than myself, even though we are both students. A person schema thus allows us to make quick character evaluations, which may or may not be confirmed on closer acquaintance. Similarly, we evaluate fictional characters according to the information which is provided for us concerning their age, appearance, social role, and so on. Our perception of fictional characters is, however, partly determined by the degree of information provided by the author, who selects the relevant information in an attempt to manipulate the reader into an appropriate judgement of the character's 'personality'.

In order to illustrate the role of person schemata more clearly, I will refer to the following extract from Pym's *Quartet in Autumn*. The extract provides a description of two women characters, Letty and Marcia, (also referred to as 'Miss Ivory') as other people see them. Both are similar, in that they are elderly single women on the verge of retirement, information which might be expected to activate a 'spinster' schema. However, in Forster's terms, both are 'round' characters, and are more complex than might be assumed from the descriptions below. Marcia, in particular, is interesting for her eccentric, often bizarre behaviour, which can be explained as a result of an operation for breast cancer; the novel implies that her brain has suffered secondary damage despite her mastectomy. Letty's characterisation is more predictable, due to her greater degree of conformity to the 'spinster' schema, but even she is more 'round' than 'flat'. The extract below describes a retirement party held for the two women, and details the impression of them formed by the other office workers present.

It was of course generally known that Miss Ivory had undergone a serious operation, but the dress she was wearing today – a rather bright hyacinth blue courtelle – was several sizes too big for her skinny figure, so that very little of her shape was visible. People at the party who did not know her were fascinated by her strange appearance, that dyed hair and the peering beady eyes, and she might have provided unusual entertainment if one had had the courage to attempt a conversation with her. But one never did have quite that sort of courage when it came to the point. Ageing, slightly mad and on the threshold of retirement, it was an uneasy combination and it was no wonder that people shied away from her or made only the most perfunctory remarks. It was difficult to imagine what her retirement would be like – impossible and rather gruesome to speculate on it.

Letty, by contrast, was boringly straightforward. Even her rather nice green-patterned jersey suit and her newly set mousy hair were perfectly in character. She had already been classified as a typical English spinster about to retire to a cottage in the country, where she would be joining with others like her to engage in church activities, attending meetings of the Women's Institute, and doing gardening and needlework.

(Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, pp. 85-86)

In order to illustrate the degree to which the two women conform or deviate from our 'spinster' schema, it is useful to perform a 'semantic feature analysis' (Toolan, 1988:99). Such an analysis involves listing the distinctive features or personality traits for each character in order to compare and contrast them. Figure 3 shows a list of the personality traits for Letty and Marcia that I have selected, mainly as a result of my reading of the extract above, although informed of course by my knowledge of their character development during the novel. Following Toolan, the presence or absence of a trait is marked '+' or '-' respectively. The list includes attributes which we might normally associate with such a person schema, namely, that a spinster is female, elderly, single and so on. However, also included are personality traits which are more tangential to the schema, such as 'smart' and 'healthy', which may not always be evoked, but which are contrasting features between Letty and Marcia. The differences between them highlight the degree to which each character diverges from (my) expectations.

**Figure 3: Character-Trait Inventory:
‘Spinster’ schema in *Quartet in Autumn***

<i>‘Personality’ Trait</i>	<i>Letty</i>	<i>Marcia</i>
Female	+	+
Elderly	+	+
Married	-	-
Sane	+	-
Conventional	+	-
Healthy	+	-
‘Feminine’	+	-
Modest	+	-
Prim	+	?
Smart	+	-
Intimidating	-	+
Friendly	-	-
Sociable	-	-

It is noticeable that more positive terms are apparent in the characterisation of Letty. This is due to the fact that by contrast with Marcia, Letty is ‘normal’; the absence of such traits as ‘modest’ and ‘conventional’ in Marcia’s characterisation accentuates her ‘oddness’, with more negative terms such as ‘intimidating’ being used to define her. It should also be noted that Letty conforms quite specifically to a ‘typical English spinster’ schema, a woman of a certain class and age, which is useful for the contrast with Marcia. It would have been possible, for example, to evoke a person schema in which ‘spinster’ could produce an image of someone more like Marcia; a person schema for a single woman character from a novel set in the middle ages, for example, might be expected to include such aspects as a strange appearance, peering, beady eyes and bizarre behaviour. Such a person schema would be less likely to evoke the ‘stereotypical English spinster’ schema, than, for example, ‘witch’. (A potential candidate is found in Winterson’s *Sexing the Cherry*, and is considered in Chapter Three).

The degree to which my selection of traits is subjective is a potential problem in such analyses, although, as Toolan notes, the usefulness of such an analysis is its ability to highlight ‘essential distinctions between characters *as the analyst sees them*’ (1988:101, emphasis in original). While other readers may disagree with my choice of some of the distinctive features for each character, the list highlights features which the text itself articulates as essential differences between them, and which are interpreted by me and assimilated into my person schema for each character. For example, the reference to Marcia’s ‘madness’ (i.e., ‘slightly mad’), is a defining feature in her characterisation, explaining much of her behaviour, and is confirmed both by the perceptions of the other characters, and by the insight into her mind. The perception that Marcia lacks the ‘feminine’ attribute might be questioned however, since the degree to which we see ‘dyed hair’, referred to in the extract above, as an attempt to ‘achieve’ femininity will differ. However, in my reading, the essential distinction between the two women is in the relative ‘success’ of their appearance. In addition, the attribute ‘prim’ is one which might typically be associated with the ‘spinster’ schema; however, due to Marcia’s characterisation as eccentric, it is difficult to assess whether or not this attribute can be applied to her, since she is more preoccupied with the inside of her mind than with the activities of other people.

The qualities which are shared between the women characters therefore are only those relating to their single status, age, sex, and lack of sociability. Ironically, the first three features are those which might be expected to form a bond between the two women, but from which they are precluded by their lack of sociability, a central theme of the novel. The characters look as if they ‘belong together in some way’ (Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.5) but they remain isolated from one another throughout. The qualities which Letty possesses and Marcia lacks, are those which render Letty

relatively more appealing (though less interesting, and more stereotypically ‘spinsterish’). The insight into Letty’s mind suggests, however, that her conformity to the image is more superficial than might be assumed from her outward appearance. The qualities which Marcia possesses and Letty lacks are those which alienate others from Marcia, namely, her appearance, her intimidating nature and her insanity. However, of the two, it is Letty who is the lonely one; Marcia’s insanity leads her to engage in endless repetitive tasks and strange activities which leave her less time to become bored or lonely. Letty is more ‘normal’ but is unable to communicate her loneliness to others; rather than the endless round of Women’s Institute meetings, and hobbies envisaged for her, Letty is confined to her rented room, and her retirement leaves a gaping hole in her daily routine.

The character-trait inventory thus illustrates the expectations of the other characters and our own, evoking a person schema which allows us to compare the two women in accordance with a stereotypical norm. Such perceptions are based on appearance and social role, evoking stereotypical information which allows us to predict the personalities of others, and the way in which they can be expected to behave. As noted, Marcia’s eccentricity results in bizarre behaviour, which is explicable to the reader due to the information provided about her mind, as will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

In addition to person schemata, we also have generalised notions of how people can be expected to behave, and we make inferences about their motives, intentions and so on. Insights from social psychology into attribution theory prove illuminating on this point, and will be discussed next.

2. 7 (ii) Attribution Theory

The discussion so far has concentrated on the potential mismatch between the reader and the implied reader, and has suggested some reasons why this relationship may be ‘faulty’. I have also focused on ‘the text’ as if all of the elements are equally significant, although the empirical studies discussed above suggest that certain textual elements are more significant than others. Certain codes perceived to be feminist are one example, but reminders of personal experiences, or being denied information concerning a character’s motives are also found to have an effect. However, the concern of this thesis is the extent to which fictional point of view affects readers’ responses, an aspect which is necessarily linked to the reader’s perception and evaluation of the characters. It is not yet apparent whether the fact of presenting a story from a specific character’s point of view is sufficient to elicit sympathy for that character, or whether the readers’ evaluation of a character influences response to that character’s point of view.

In this section, I will consider the relationship between the reader, and the characters and events depicted in the novel, with reference to attribution theory. Attribution theory investigates the way in which we explain relationships between cause and effect, how we locate the cause of some action or behaviour, and may therefore be extended to include our explanations of fictional events. My reading of Marcia’s ‘personality’ alluded to the fact that her behaviour is bizarre, and that this is related to the unusual working of her mind, apparently a result of damage from cancer. As such, I located the *cause* of Marcia’s behaviour in disease, in order to explain the *effect*, namely, her strange behaviour. Marcia’s is an unusual case however, and we might exonerate her behaviour as being beyond her control. In most normal circumstances, we assume that actions are the result of underlying motives which can

be attributable to an aspect of the actor's personality, a point to which I will return below. Explanations of cause and effect are therefore relevant to the way that we interpret fictional events, and are often affected by our evaluation of the people (or characters) involved in those events. We interpret the actions of fictional characters as if they are real people, assuming that they are motivated and goal-oriented. Differing explanations of the same fictional events can 'show up important individual and social differences' (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:111/2), an aspect is relevant to our differing interpretations of the same story, or of our individual responses to fictional characters and their respective points of view.

The aspects of attribution theory which are of most relevance for this thesis fall within the following areas;

- 1. the distinction between person attributions and situation attributions
- 2. causal schemata

2. 7 (iii) Person and Situation Attributions

To illustrate the concept known as attribution theory, Hewstone and Antaki (1988) discuss a study undertaken by Duncan (1976). In Duncan's study, white students were asked to watch a videotaped argument in which one participant pushed the other. Despite the fact that Duncan varied the race of those involved in the argument, i.e., between victim and protagonist, the results showed a clear effect for race.

When the protagonist was black, subjects said that the violent behaviour was due to personal characteristics of the harm-doer; when the protagonist was white, on the other hand, subjects 'explained away' the behaviour in terms of the situation. (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:111)

The variation in the students' descriptions shows how the race of the protagonist influenced their response, and suggests that responses to fictional characters similarly will vary according to the reader's evaluation of that character, as

is apparent in Rhys' response to Jane's point of view in *Jane Eyre*, noted above.

Insights from attribution theory therefore allow another dimension to be added to the reader side of the reading equation. Interpretations of events may vary depending upon whether the perceiver of those events sees the cause to be located within the person who is performing the action, termed a 'person attribution', or whether the cause of the behaviour may be attributed to external forces, termed a 'situation attribution'. The concept is known as 'correspondent inference theory';

People try to infer from an action whether the action itself corresponds to an enduring personal characteristic of the actor [...]

(Brehm and Kassir, 1996:91)

Person attributions can be divided into two stages, firstly, the perceiver decides whether or not the actor knows the consequences of that action, thus making an 'attribution of intention'; secondly, the perceiver compares that action with what other people might be expected to do in similar circumstances, known as an 'attribution of dispositions'. Dispositions are 'stable characteristics such as personality traits, attitudes and abilities' (Brehm and Kassir, 1996:90). Such inferences are made when the perceiver has information from multiple sources, known as the 'co-variation principle' (Kelley, 1973).

In order to infer whether or not a behaviour is due to a disposition of the actor, the perceiver evaluates the behaviour according to a) the degree of free choice the actor is perceived to have, b) how expected the action is, and c) the consequences of that action. The more unusual an action is perceived to be, the more confident the perceiver may feel about making a person attribution against the actor, known as the 'non-common effects principle'. The more socially undesirable an action is, the more negative the person attribution will be accordingly.

In order to illustrate these points, I will attempt to show how attribution theory might explain the way in which we build up an impression of fictional characters, making inferences about their ‘personalities’ as a result of their ‘actions’. I have noted that the characterisation of Marcia in *Quartet in Autumn* as ‘eccentric’ is partly a result of her unusual actions. Marcia’s hobbies include collecting milk bottles and saving plastic bags, and her favourite activity is her regular check-up with the surgeon who performed her mastectomy. Her ‘relationship’ with him is so important to her that she even stands outside his home, observing his house from the outside. In accordance with correspondent inference theory, we might conclude that Marcia’s actions are a) freely chosen, and b) unexpected, thus reinforcing the impression of her as eccentric, and resulting in a person attribution (i.e., she is an eccentric ‘person’). However, the degree to which we perceive her actions to be involuntary, a result of her illness, may persuade us to attribute blame to the situation, and exonerate Marcia of the responsibility of her actions (i.e., she behaves in an eccentric way because of her situation). The distinction between these two attributions is the distinction between person and situation attributions, sometimes referred to as ‘internal’ and ‘external’ attributions respectively. Our perception of Marcia’s degree of choice, and the expectedness of her actions is potentially variable from reader to reader. While her behaviour may be perceived to be unusual, the degree to which it might be expected, depends upon our perception of the effects of an illness such as cancer upon the mind.

The third aspect, relating to the effects or consequences of an action, refers to the outcome for the actor. An action which has many desirable outcomes is less informative than an action which has only one.

For example, you are likely to be uncertain about exactly why a person stays on (sic) a job that is enjoyable, high paying, and in an attractive location – three desirable outcomes, each sufficient to explain the behaviour. In contrast,

you may feel more certain about why a person stays on a job that is tedious and low paying but in an attractive location – only one desirable outcome.
(Brehm and Kassin, 1996:92)

Marcia's actions have several desirable outcomes for Marcia personally. Her visits to the surgeon, both prescribed and voluntary, are reassuring to her, as is her compulsive collecting of bags and milk bottles; they appear to instil in her a sense of control over her physical environment which is sadly lacking with regard to her physical well-being. However, her actions are socially undesirable for her neighbour, Priscilla, who worries about the effect of Marcia's behaviour on her own social life, in particular, how Marcia's neglected garden might prevent Priscilla from entertaining. In the extract below, Priscilla is observing Marcia, who is digging in the garden in an effort to find her cat's grave.

All the same, one could perhaps offer a little gardening assistance, digging, for example...but not now, when Priscilla had people coming to dinner, the avocado to prepare and mayonnaise to make. Perhaps it was a fine enough evening to have drinks on the little patio they had made, but the view of the neglected garden next door would detract from the elegance of the occasion, and if Miss Ivory was going to go on digging in this disturbing way something would have to be done about it.

(Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.116)

The combination of a) choice, b) expectedness and c) consequences, in Marcia's case, tells us that her behaviour is most likely a result of her illness rather than a stable personality trait, and may cause us to excuse her behaviour. However, the consequences of her actions result in negative person attributions from Priscilla and other characters. The difference between these two types of attributions can be explained as a result of the informational differences between narrator/narratee, and character/character; the characters are only able to judge Marcia according to her actions, whereas the reader has access to the state of her mind and hence the motivation behind her behaviour. To return to the difference between attributions of

intentions, and attributions of dispositions, the reader might conclude that Marcia's actions are intentional, but that she does not appreciate the consequences of those actions. For the other characters, her actions are seen as intentional, and lead to the inference that they are a result of personal dispositions; she is 'eccentric'. In both cases, the first stage (attribution of intention) may well lead to the correspondent inference (attribution of disposition) i.e., 'Marcia is eccentric'; however, the implied reader may be less inclined to make a negative person attribution than are the other characters.

To illustrate these three aspects more clearly, I will now turn to the characterisation of Letty in more detail. I noted above that of the two women characters, Letty is the more stereotypical and predictable, although both she and Marcia are 'round' characters. The impression of roundness in Letty's case is partly achieved by a sense that in many ways, Letty typifies the characteristics of some people of her age and era, including their views and attitudes (although, as noted above, person schemata are often distorted). For these reasons, Letty's characterisation is believable, and confirms what we expect from a 'person' like her.

Letty rents a room from her landlady, Mrs Embrey, who summons the tenants to a meeting to inform them that that she is retiring. Letty's new landlord is Jacob Olatunde, a Nigerian priest, who moves into the house with his extended family. Finding the friendliness and hymn-singing of the Olatunde's 'disturbing' (Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.56), Letty chooses to leave her lodgings in favour of a rented room in the house of an elderly woman church-goer, Mrs. Pope. Mrs. Pope's house is, in Letty's opinion, 'bleak and silent' (Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.64), in contrast to Letty's former lodgings. Knowing that Letty's actions are voluntary, the implied reader infers certain things about Letty's 'personality'. Firstly, we might infer that

Letty's choice is a result of her desire to disassociate herself from the friendly Nigerians, due to an inherent racism which is in keeping with the stereotypical image of a white, single, elderly female of mid nineteen-seventies Britain. Letty's choice is, however, also linked to the second aspect of correspondent inference theory, i.e., the 'expectedness' of Letty's actions. Finding herself the last of the tenants to seek alternative accommodation, Letty, as a single woman, feels it would be inappropriate to remain in the house with Mr. Olatunde and his family. Her decision to seek alternative accommodation in Mrs. Pope's house is more in keeping with Letty's role as retired spinster. Letty's choice is, in this respect, partly constrained, a result of the expectations of her social role as she perceives them.

The third aspect, namely, the effects or consequences of an action, helps to reinforce the poignancy of Letty's characterisation. Letty's existence in her new rented room is a meagre one in which the days drag, and she is lonely and bored, a situation which is contrasted with the potential 'family' which she has rejected in the Olatunde household. The reader is invited to compare the consequences of Letty's actions with an alternative; remaining in the Olatunde household might have had several desirable outcomes, company, entertainment and warmth. This choice of action is rejected in favour of one which has only one desirable outcome (in Letty's opinion), namely, respectability. Letty's choice implies that Letty favours respectability over companionship, and we infer something about her 'personality', i.e., that she is perhaps reserved, a personality trait which is in keeping with her characterisation as 'spinster'.

My discussion of Marcia's and Letty's characterisation has attempted to show how we can use these three aspects of correspondent inference theory to build up an impression of characters' 'personalities'. The characterisation of Letty as stereotypical

‘spinster’ is confirmed by her choice of actions and its degree of expectedness; the outcome of her action and its comparison with the one rejected however highlights the poignancy of her decision, of which Letty herself is aware.

My discussion so far has referred to the ‘behaviour’ of Letty and Marcia, and has also alluded to the fact that Marcia’s actions might be judged differently by the implied reader than by the other characters. I noted above that we do not judge the behaviour of others in isolation, but compare their behaviour with that of others in similar situations. Kelley (1973) refers to this as the **co-variation principle**, and suggests that we make use of three types of information, namely, consensus, consistency and distinctiveness information. I will exemplify these again with reference to Letty’s characterisation. We might compare Letty’s behaviour with those of others, for example, not everyone might have made the same decision as Letty, although some might. The degree to which people react to the same stimulus is termed **consensus** information, and would apply to a situation in which everyone reacted to the arrival of the Olatunde family in the same way as Letty. This is a point which Letty herself ponders;

She wondered what Edwin and Norman and Marcia would have done in the circumstances, but came to no conclusions. Other people’s reactions were unpredictable and while she could imagine Edwin entering into the religious aspect of the evening and even taking part in the service, it might well be that Norman and Marcia, usually so set in their isolation, would in some surprising way have been drawn into the friendly group. Only Letty remained outside.
(Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.57)

The fact that the other three female tenants in Letty’s lodgings also find alternative accommodation following the arrival of the Olatunde family may lead us to infer that there is nothing unique about Letty’s behaviour. However, we might differ in our perception of the reasons for those actions; is it due to the fact that a) all the tenants are racist? or b) that they are all single women? We are only provided with

consensus information which allows us to infer that *something* about the change of circumstances persuades them to leave.

In Letty's case however, information which is provided at other times allows us to infer that in fact Letty rejects most forms of human contact. In this respect, her behaviour is **consistent**; her discomfort in the Olatunde household is partly due to her apparent inability to relate to others, and she consistently rejects most forms of contact. Our interpretation of Letty's behaviour illustrates the fact that we are sometimes better able to evaluate the behaviour of fictional characters; although Letty's actions might imply that she is racist, the insight into her mind, only available to us because this is a work of fiction, allows us to infer that she is reserved and unable to relate well to others. We are thus provided with information which allows us to interpret aspects of Letty's behaviour as **distinctive**; distinctiveness information is that information which tells us how the same person reacts to different entities. Letty avoids contact with *everyone*, not just with the Olatunde family, and in this respect her behaviour is unlike that of most other people.

The different types of information (consensus, consistency and distinctiveness) thus allow us to re-evaluate our opinion of Letty's 'personality'. Her actions could be construed as evidence of a racist attitude, since the people around her react in a similar way. We could therefore view this as 'consensus' information, since everyone responds to the change of landlord by moving home. However, the insight into Letty's mind provides us with consistency and distinctiveness information, since Letty behaves like this with everyone, not just with her landlord, and she is therefore different from most others. We can thus make a correspondent inference that Letty is cold and reserved perhaps, rather than racist *per se*. The extent to which we blame Letty for her actions, thus making a 'person attribution' against her, or see her actions

to be a result of the situation in which she find herself (i.e., a ‘situation attribution’) may vary from reader to reader. The text does imply however that Letty herself is to blame for her own situation. For example, in the early stages of the novel, Letty rejects the friendly overtures of another woman in a café;

It was too late for any kind of gesture. Once again Letty had failed to make contact. (Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.7)

Kelley’s co-variation principle thus describes situations where we have information from multiple sources. In fictional terms, this might also be compared with a narrative which utilises several different narrators or points of view. In Burney’s *Evelina*, the rudeness which is attributed to Evelina’s behaviour at the ball by those who do not know her, as described above, is a result of the fact that her behaviour is seen as ‘distinctive’ and is evaluated negatively. In the interpretation of the male characters present, Evelina’s *intentional* bad manners result in a person attribution against her, i.e., ‘she is rude’. By contrast, the reader attributes Evelina’s behaviour to inexperience, and infers that Evelina’s rudeness is not a characteristic of hers, but is in fact *unintentional* and is due to the fact that she has never attended a ball before (i.e., a situation attribution). Evelina’s version of the events which happen to her are corroborated by letters from other (usually older and more knowledgeable) characters offering slightly different perspectives, which nevertheless support the impression of Evelina’s innocence and naiveté. While Evelina’s narration of her distress at her involuntary rudeness is one source of information which the reader uses to form an impression of her character, other ‘narrators’ provide further sources. For example, the Reverend Villars’ letters to his niece comment on her behaviour, and offer advice for her future conduct, reinforcing the reader’s perception of her ‘personality’, as in the example below.

Alas, my child, the artlessness of your nature, and the simplicity of your education, alike unfit you for the thorny paths of the great and busy world.
(Burney, *Evelina*, p.116)

The multiple sources of information (different points of view) therefore reinforce the impression of Evelina as an ‘innocent abroad’, allowing the reader to infer that it is the situation in which she finds herself, rather than her ‘personality’, which is responsible for Evelina’s ‘rude’ behaviour.

Kelley describes an alternative situation in which our interpretation of an actor’s behaviour is based on information from a single observation, but which takes into account a **configuration** of factors. The distinction between these two types of information, (i.e., co-variation and configuration), is the difference between the information available to the reader of *Evelina*, and to the other characters at the ball; the reader has information from a number of sources which accumulate into an impression of Evelina’s ‘personality’ (co-variation), whereas the other characters have only this one occasion (configuration).

Evelina’s behaviour results in a person attribution against her on the part of the men; she is ‘ignorant or mischievous’ (Burney, *Evelina*, p.36). In addition, her rudeness is seen to be a characteristic of the social group to which she belongs; the fact that she is a ‘country parson’s daughter’ (Burney, *Evelina*, p.35) means that she is seen to conform to society’s expectations of her (i.e., ‘society’ in Burney’s time); country people are expected to lack social manners. Evelina is thus seen to be displaying characteristics of the group to which she belongs, namely, the ‘ignorance and bad manners’ of country people. Such a tendency to categorise behaviours as characteristic of a specific group is also illustrated by the responses of the white students in Duncan’s study noted above, who attributed ‘violent’ behaviour to the

protagonist who was black. Similarly, Rhys' objection to the characterisation of Bertha Rochester in *Jane Eyre* may also be explained by the fact that certain characteristics are apparently attributed by the implied author to Creole women as a whole (e.g., difference from white women and lunacy); hence Rhys' comment on the 'Englishness' of the novel. Social psychologists refer to this tendency as the 'ingroup/outgroup' distinction;

an individual attributes the behaviour of another person not simply to individual characteristics or intentions, but to characteristics and intentions associated with the group to which the other belongs.
(Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:130)

The race or sex of a fictional character may therefore have an effect on readers' evaluation of fictional characters, and on their response to that character's point of view. Similarly, Mills' work discussed above illustrates the tendency to assume that the feminist reader of feminist fiction is part of the 'ingroup', and will be predisposed to recognise certain familiar codes and themes which are not available to members of the 'outgroup', i.e., non-feminists. The narrative schemata alluded to in section 2.5 cue readers to recognise certain textual codes which reinforce their impression of themselves as group members (i.e., feminists).

There are criticisms of Kelley's framework however, since we do not always have access to multiple sources of information in everyday life. However, in fiction, our interpretation of a character's behaviour can be affected by the type of information provided by the author, as will be discussed further in Chapter Three. The amount and type of information which is granted to us about a character therefore has the potential to affect the way in which we respond to them, and attribution theory highlights other areas for consideration in the reading relationship, not only between implied author and implied reader, but also between narrator and implied reader and/or character and implied reader.

Kelley also makes a distinction between the roles of ‘actors’, and ‘observers’. ‘Actors’ typically ‘attribute their own actions to situational requirements’, whereas observers ‘explain them by reference to stable personal dispositions’ (Kelley, 1973:125). Such a difference can be seen in my reading of Letty’s characterisation; I have argued that her decision to leave her lodgings is a result of her ‘reserved personality’ and a desire for respectability. Kelley suggests that the difference between the two positions is dependent on the amount and salience of available information. Again, this is of relevance to point of view issues, and is similar to the distinction between internal and external viewpoints to be discussed in Chapter Three, (but not to be confused with internal and external attributions discussed above). In fiction, the kind of information available via internal perspectives might be expected to allow readers to assume the position of ‘actor’, i.e., the character or narrator role, since knowing the reasons for an action should predispose readers to refer to situational constraints to explain that action. In fact, I have referred to situational aspects to explain Letty’s decision, but still attribute her actions to a fundamental aspect of her ‘personality’. However, the informational differences between actor and observer roles (sometimes referred to as ‘self’ and ‘other’), may help to explain the differing responses of men and women in Mills’ study, since the ability to contrast the speaker’s attitude to menstruation with one’s own is a specifically female response, illustrating the ‘ingroup/outgroup’ distinction on two levels; between men and women, and between feminists and non-feminists.

At this point, it is worth mentioning a study by Galper (1976), who attempted to discover the effects of ‘turning actors into observers’. As has been noted, when asked to take the role of ‘actor’, people pay greater attention to situational factors, whereas those assuming the role of ‘observer’ focus on the behaviour of the actor

(Galper, 1976:328). In Galper's study, readers were given a story to read and were either asked to empathise with the character (empathy study), or to 'picture the events clearly' (social perception study). Galper found that observers who were asked to empathise displayed the same attention to situational factors as do actors, significantly more than *non-emphasising* observers. Subjects who had not been instructed to empathise

displayed the typical 'observer bias', rating personal factors as significantly more important than situational factors. (Galper, 1976:333)

Thus the way in which readers attributed causes to the character's personal traits, or to the situation, allowed Galper to consider whether or not they empathised with that character. 'Empathetic' responses were provided by readers who made reference to situational constraints to explain the behaviour of characters; non-empathising readers located the cause in the actor (Galper, 1976:334). This has relevance for the study of the effect of point of view, since those readers who respond empathetically to internal point of view, (i.e., one in which the reader has access to the internal thoughts of a character) may, as a consequence, make allowances for characters, placing more emphasis on situational factors. By contrast, an external point of view (one which provides no insight into the character's thoughts) places readers more in the role of observer, and might be expected to result in a correspondingly greater amount of blame being attached to the character or 'actor', as noted by Pollard-Gott, (1993:56), to be discussed below. There are however many more permutations in the amount and kind of information which can be provided via point of view, as will be discussed in Chapter Three.

By making reference to reader's attributions, Galper was able to distinguish varying kinds of response ranging from 'empathy' and 'sympathy' to 'understanding';

[...] the presence of a matching emotional response between subject and object is the critical factor which differentiates empathy from 'sympathy,' 'projection,' 'understanding,' or simply the ability to label correctly the emotional state of another person. (Galper, 1976:334).

'Empathy' might describe those situations where the reader can imagine her or himself in a similar situation to the characters, and experience similar emotions vicariously. We can also distinguish 'sympathy' from 'understanding', since understanding does not necessarily entail sympathy. These distinctions are relevant to the readers' responses to the empirical studies undertaken for this thesis, and will be discussed in detail in Chapters Five and Seven. Thus Galper's study suggests that the way in which readers make causal attributions can be used as a measure of their response to characters. However, there are problems with this, as will be discussed below.

The link between attribution theory and fictional point of view is discussed by Pollard-Gott (1993), although she offers no empirical data to illustrate her discussion. She argues that readers evaluate fictional characters with reference to 'self-relevant variables', including such apparently simple factors as the reader and author being of the same sex. In this way, readers 'identify' with protagonists and attribute responsibility 'as they would in reference to themselves' (Pollard-Gott, 1993:518), an aspect which has already been discussed in relation to Rhys' response to the characterisation of Bertha Rochester. Pollard-Gott suggests that changing narrative perspective can alter the reader's response;

By manipulating point of view and available information, a novel can affect the salience of the various characters and the features of their situations. Increasing the salience of a character's environment or situation will lead the reader-observer to adopt the character's stance to a greater degree and appreciate the myriad mitigating circumstances that seem to govern the character's behavior. (Pollard-Gott, 1993:506)

However, this assumes a straightforward, unequivocal response to characters, yet it is possible for readers to relate differently to different aspects of the narrative, and to respond to various aspects of characterisation in varying ways, at various times, and even change their minds on subsequent readings. These aspects will be discussed in detail on consideration of the responses of participants in the two studies described in this thesis. However, commenting on the fact that readers often refer to the same foregrounded textual elements yet interpret them differently, Pollard-Gott suggests that this may be a result of the activation of differing schemata (Pollard-Gott, 1993:518), an aspect which is discussed in section 2. 7 (ii) below.

There are obviously some points of comparison between the way in which we perceive cause and effect relationships in the real world and in the fictional world, and which is dependent on the amount and kind of information available to us. Most noticeably, we are sometimes better able to judge the behaviour of a fictional character and make inferences about their ‘personalities’ as a result of the insight into their minds. We often know their intentions, a situation which is not always true of the people we meet in real life. While we often have to make inferences about real people, the information with which we are provided in fiction often allows us to make more informed character evaluations.

However, Kelley himself notes that there are some problems with attribution theory, noticeably the degree of interaction between the factors referred to above. Other criticisms which have been levelled at correspondence inference theory concern the fact that it only applies to intentional actions, and does not cater for ‘occurrences’, i.e., those instances where actions are ‘involuntary’ (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:114). To some extent, this is illustrated by my discussion of the inferences generated by Marcia’s behaviour; while we might perceive her actions to be intentional, her

apparent lack of awareness of the effects of her actions on others makes it problematic to make a person attribution against her. Alternatively, it is not really her situation which is to blame, but her illness, i.e., an occurrence. Marcia's behaviour is not easily catered for by the attributional framework above, and illustrates some of the problems with the theory, an aspect which is discussed more fully in Chapter Five below. Researchers can find it difficult to distinguish internal (person) attributions from 'external' (situation) attributions (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988: 119), and coding readers' responses along these lines should be treated with caution. Such a distinction assumes a 'single bipolar scale' (ibid:119-20) whereas people often use both internal (person) attributions and external (situation) attributions when providing explanations, as is apparent in my discussion of Letty's characterisation. Again, this aspect will be discussed more fully in Chapters Five and Seven

Similarly, it has been found that researchers attempting to code the responses of participants have experienced difficulty in trying to distinguish between internal and external attributions. For example, Hewstone and Antaki describe a study by Nisbett *et al.* (1973) in which students were asked to explain their reasons for choosing their course. Responses in which the students referred to themselves were coded as 'internal'; however, this proved to be unsatisfactory, for the following reasons;

Thus 'I want to make a lot of money' was coded as internal, while 'Chemistry is a high-paying field' was coded as external. An obvious criticism of this method is that the two types of statements contain similar information and in fact imply one another.

(Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:119)

Both internal and external attributions are therefore appropriate, and researchers have found that people often use combinations of person and situation attributions in their explanations of events (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:120. The

distinction between internal and external attributions is therefore not as fundamental nor as easily distinguished as it might at first appear, again an issue which will be discussed more fully in consideration of the results of the two studies described in Chapters Five and Seven.

In addition, researchers found that there is a tendency to ‘over-emphasise dispositions and underemphasise situational influences as causes of behaviour’ (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:125), termed the **fundamental attribution error**. Person attributions are therefore often stronger than situational attributions, since

the actor’s behaviour is often more *salient* than the situation [...] actor and act form a ‘causal unit’; the perceiver focuses on the other person, not the situation, and he or she comes to be overrated as causally important. (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:126)

This is an important consideration in point of view terms, since the character whose point of view is given priority will obviously be the focus of attention in readers’ explanations of fictional events, and which is again evident in my discussion of Letty’s characterisation. A study by Storms (1973) set out to investigate the effect on perception of being able to observe one’s own behaviour, since ‘the fundamental difference between self and other’ is the fact that they ‘have, quite literally, different “points of view”’ (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:127). Storms found, as predicted, that reversal of actor and observer roles resulted in more situational attributions from observers, and less situational attributions from actors (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:128). Changing the perspective did therefore have an effect on causal attributions. However, it was found that in all cases,

the participant in the centre of the visual field [...] is rated as more causally important, but that this weighting does not always have a clear effect on dispositional and situational attributions. (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:129)

Once again, we are left with the question of why perceivers interpret the same elements in different ways.

Another study which attempts to investigate the effect of assuming different roles in relation to the narrative was conducted by Fiske, Taylor and Etcoff (1979). They attempted to assess the extent to which visual information or ‘imaging’ affected the way in which readers recalled elements of stories, and what effect this had on empathy. Their suggestion that perception influences recall can be seen as relevant to the way that readers respond to point of view, since the ability to ‘see’ events as a character sees them should elicit a sympathetic response and predispose readers to produce situation attributions as if they are the actor in those events, as was apparently the case in Galper’s study, discussed above. Fiske *et al.* (1979) set out to investigate the extent to which

The perceptual explanation can account for the effects of empathy on vicarious attributions by arguing that subjects construct a visual image and scan it in a fashion similar to what subjects do when they scan their actual environment, and thus they come to ‘see’ the world as the actor sees it. (Fiske, Taylor and Etcoff, 1979:356)

Their hypothesis was that readers who were asked to adopt a specific character role would be ‘preferentially biased [...] towards details associated with the adopted role’, including both visual and non-visual senses (Fiske *et al.* 1979:358). In addition, they proposed that ‘character-identifying subjects’ would attribute blame for ‘mishaps’ to the other characters in the story, rather than blaming the character whose role they had been asked to adopt, in a ‘vicarious defensive attribution’ (Fiske *et al.* 1979:358/9). In this way, they hoped to demonstrate the effect of role-taking on perspective (or imaging) and ‘empathising’. This is a potentially useful study due to the similarity of the link between role-taking and empathy, and the assumed link between internal perspective and reader sympathy. Fiske *et al.* predicted that readers would recall a high level of detail associated with their adopted role, whereas readers who were asked to assume the role of ‘observer’ would recall a high level of details

about the person with whom the role-taker interacts (Fiske *et al.*, 1979:363). Again the actor-observer roles may be compared with the reader's position with respect to internal and external point of view.

However, the results of the study were inconclusive, and Fiske *et al.* were unable to judge whether or not recall of details was a result of the presence of items which were 'self-relevant' to readers, (the ego-centric hypothesis), or whether they were connected with 'vantage-relevant' details, (the perspective hypothesis). Their prediction that assuming the vantage point of a character would induce the reader to attribute causality 'as the actor attributes it', was not confirmed, leading them to conclude that

imaging and empathy are different kinds of manipulations, and they yield qualitatively different material for the social perceiver. Imaging (or vantage point) leads to differential recall, but to variable attributions of causality. Empathy leads to somewhat less variable perceptions of causality and only weak recall differences [...] (Fiske, Taylor and Etcoff, 1979:374)

The interaction between self-relevant details (those which can be related to real-life experiences) and the alignment with the character's point of view is one which remains difficult to determine. Disappointingly, the study merely confirms that being able to adopt the perspective of an 'actor', or character is no guarantee of 'empathy'. Being able to 'see' things from a character's point of view does not presumably prevent readers from resisting that point of view, and still produces 'variable' causal attributions. Thus it is still not clear why perceivers respond differently despite being given the same stimulus, although Pollard-Gott's suggestion that different schemata are activated might offer an explanation. The notion of causal schemata is also discussed by Kelley and is considered next.

2. 7 (iv) Causal Schemata

The above discussion above has concentrated on the notion of schemata activation in connection with familiar situations and people, and has considered the usefulness of such theories in the analysis of fictional characters. As noted above, the role of the characters in fiction is now presumed to be as important as the plot; they do not merely move the plot along, but are interesting for their ‘personalities’. As result, we often talk about characters as if they have a life of their own, independent of the fiction, and are responsible for their own fate. Such a tendency is evident in my discussion of the actions of Marcia and Letty above, in which I implied that Marcia was less responsible for the outcomes of her actions than Letty was for the outcome of hers. When we interpret the actions of characters therefore we also map onto the story a perception of cause and effect. For example, I argued that Marcia’s illness was a cause of her behaviour, and that Letty’s desire to move was a result of the change in her tenancy arrangements. Interpretations such as these suggest the activation of causal schemata, a notion which is again associated with Kelley (1973).

In cases where information is incomplete, Kelley argues that we make causal attributions according to causal schemata which are based on our experience of cause and effect relationships. This is obviously relevant to the way in which we evaluate fictional characters according to the amount of information granted to us concerning their motives.

The mature individual has a repertoire of {such} abstract ideas about the operation and interaction of causal factors. These conceptions {enable him to make} economical and fast attributional analysis by providing a framework within which bits and pieces of relevant information can be fitted in order to draw reasonably good causal inferences
(Kelley, 1973:15 parentheses in original)

Such causal schemata are useful in that they enable us to make attributions from incomplete information; they are general conceptions about cause and effect, and

provide us with a 'causal shorthand' for 'carrying out complex inferences quickly and easily' (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:117-118). Kelley argues that the simplest schema is the 'multiple sufficient cause' schema (MSC), which accounts for those instances where 'any of several causes can produce the same effect' (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:117). For example, poor educational achievement may be attributed to home, school, environment, or lack of effort, any one of which may result in an underachieving student. Kelley also suggested a number of principles which come into effect whenever this causal schema is activated. Associated with the MSC schema are the 'discounting principle' and the 'augmentation principle'. The discounting principle assumes that the 'role of a given cause in producing the effect is *discounted* if other plausible causes are present' (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:117), whereas the 'augmentation principle' assumes that 'the role of a given cause is *augmented* (increased) if an effect occurs in the presence of an inhibitory cause' (ibid.). Thus the discounting principle would explain why, for example, in a case of a student who was recently bereaved and failed an exam, we would be more likely to see the bereavement as the cause of the failure, while other possible causes, such as lack of effort, would be discounted. The augmentation principle accounts for the reverse situation, where we would see success in the face of adverse conditions as an indication of greater effort or ability.

However, although the concept of causal schemata is plausible, it is still only a theoretical concept, due to the obvious difficulty of trying to relate responses to cognitive processes. As Hewstone and Antaki note, it is only apparent that 'people act *as if* they use schemata' (1988:118, their emphasis). In addition, the notion of causal schemata does not usefully explain differences in personal perception, and the question still remains as to why people can interpret the same event in different ways.

In addition, Hewstone and Antaki note that schemata are not only generalised conceptions about the relationship between cause and effect, but are influenced by cultural knowledge, for example, the responses of the white students in Duncan's (1976) study, referred to above appeared to be based on a schema that assumes that black people are prone to violence (Hewstone and Antaki, 1988:118).

Thus, while attribution theory can help to explain the different ways in which readers make causal attributions, it is still apparent that readers might have different schemata which could account for individual differences. Another reader of *Quartet in Autumn*, for example, might argue that Letty's landlady is the cause of her situation, or that the cause of Marcia's behaviour is in fact her 'personality', and nothing to do with her illness. Such differences are the result of the activation and interaction of different causal, narrative and/or person schemata. Although theories of resisting reading can highlight obvious differences between readers arising from sex, age, race, class, and so on, less tangible, and harder to explore, is the role of the reader's own personal experience, which is obviously highly variable. While we may have causal schemata relating to general concepts such as relationships between the sexes, for example, these will also be influenced by our individual experiences. Thus our response to a narrative is affected by our ability to identify with some aspect of the character's personality, experiences, situation, and so on, an aspect which is explored by Seilman and Larsen in their 'personal resonance' study. Their contention that similarities between the character's experiences and the reader's own, allows the reader to 'project' her or himself into the character's viewpoint, experience similar emotions, and attribute blame in a similar way to that of the character, may explain variations in readers' responses. In such cases, we would expect that the similarity with some aspect of the reader's experience is responsible for a response that is at

least sympathetic, and may well be (also) empathetic. However, as has already been noted, it is also possible to resist either the views expressed by, or the behaviour of, a character, even when the reader is provided with information about their inner thoughts, motives and so on (i.e., internal point of view). In such an example, the reader's response may be affected, perhaps resulting in a 'person attribution'; the reader places the blame for events on the character or 'actor', as I have done in Letty's case. In this last example, it is not the way in which point of view is presented which creates distance from the character, it is the reader who distances her or himself from the character, resulting in a reaction which is more similar to that of 'observer'. In addition, a reader who identifies with some aspect of the character's portrayed experience may be more inclined to respond empathetically even when no information is provided as to the character's thoughts or motives, i.e., an external viewpoint, due to the 'personal resonance' factor. Sympathy may be aroused for similar reasons, and, presumably, there is the same scope for attributing blame to external situational factors in such instances. By extension, the potential for vicarious emotional identification may be seen in any narrative situation despite the type of viewpoint which is adopted. If such personal factors are present, it is possible for a reader to respond empathetically to characters, and if 'understanding' can lead to resistance to an internal point of view, then sympathy or empathy can also occur with an external point of view. Differences between responses may arise equally therefore from the reader's own experience, not (only) as a result of insights provided by the text.

Such complex interactions between textual manipulations and readers' experience, both personal and fictional, will be considered in my discussion of the results of the preliminary study in Chapter Five. Some difficulties arise from attempting to relate these empirical studies to theories of point of view, since despite

the usefulness of the concepts they highlight, the focus of their attention is different, both from the concerns of this thesis, and from each other.

2. 8 Conclusion

This survey of studies relating to attribution theory suggests that readers' responses to fiction are subject to many influences, and that these will create differences in the way in which fictional point of view operates. Despite the concentration on the responses of readers to fictional texts there are relatively few which focus specifically on the effect of point of view. References to narrative perspective appear to be tangential to the issues targeted by most of the empirical studies discussed above. While the inevitability of a sympathetic response to internal perspective is now questioned and various models have attempted to show reading positions available to readers, these still do not take into account the potential complexities concerned with point of view and response. The two studies which are described below in Chapters Five and Seven demonstrate that the responses of actual readers are much more complex than assumed so far. However, we now have several issues to consider when analysing the responses of readers to fictional texts.

1. Mills' references to 'subject identities' can be used to suggest ways in which the text addresses the reader and the way in which the reader responds, i.e. whether they consider themselves in the role of addressee implied by the text, or as an 'overhearer'. In the studies described below this will be considered in relation to the language used by the participants rather than the content of their responses in order to account for similarities between readers as well as differences.

2. The notion of feminist codes will be considered both in an analysis of the stories used in the study and in the discussion of the responses.

3. The activation of narrative schemata should be apparent in the readers' responses and may be compared and contrasted. Such aspects as literary training will be apparent in their tendency to produce 'literal' or 'figural' readings. The difference between the two will be dependent partly on the tendency to draw on real life experience and is linked to the notion of address in 1. above. 'Figural' readers are those who also read for 'human significance', and who draw on their awareness of other texts and genres.

4. The way in which readers attribute causality will be considered for the relationship of this to empathy, sympathy, understanding, resistance etc. This is also related to the distinction between 'actors' and 'observers', and its comparison with internal and external point of view. For this reason, the way in which readers re-tell the story will be compared to the original point of view

These issues will be considered in the discussion of the responses of the participants in the preliminary study to be discussed below. The text used in this study is *Lappin and Lapinova* by Virginia Woolf, an analysis of which story follows in Chapter Four. First, Chapter Three outlines, with examples, the various linguistic indicators of point of view and the models which have been posited for describing different fictional narratives.

Chapter Three Types of Narration, Focalization, and Point of View

3. 1 Introduction

In Chapter Two, I discussed the ideal relationship between author and reader and noted the possibilities for resistance to the point of view presented in the text. I also alluded to the tendency to assume that certain types of narration are more likely to elicit sympathetic responses than others, subsequently discussing additional factors which may have an effect on response, for example, the role of conventions, narrative frameworks and feminist codes, cognitive schemata and causal attributions.

In addition, I considered some empirical studies into reader's responses, and commented on the fact that the relationship between textual elements and the reader's response so far remain unsatisfactorily explained. The studies discussed in Chapter Two suggest both the importance of point of view, (cf. the responses of readers in Andringa's study, who commented on the problem of *not* having the point of view of the female character), and the indeterminate nature of the reader's response.

Having considered the reader dimension in Chapter Two, it is necessary to explore the various ways in which a narrative can be told, thereby returning to the textual dimension. The combination of these two elements, i.e., textual analysis and analysis of readers' responses, form the basis of my discussion of the studies reported in Chapters Five and Seven. In this chapter, I will first consider, with examples, the various types of narration available to the author, concentrating, in general terms, on the difference in the degree and type of information which can be granted to the reader, and problematising the notion of the potential effect on response. This will be followed by a discussion of the frameworks which have been suggested by Fowler (1986) and Simpson (1993) for categorisation of the various types

of narration according to linguistic criteria. I will also consider any problems for which the frameworks are unable to cater.

3. 2 First-person Narration

In Chapter Two, I discussed extracts from *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Evelina*, novels written in the first-person, and considered their potential for evoking a sympathetic response from the reader. I suggested that the implied reader of Atwood's fiction shares her feminist views, and that the assumed symmetry between implied author and narrator allows for a conflation of these roles. Thus, the narrator of *The Handmaid's Tale* produces generic statements which reflect her position within a patriarchal society, albeit a fictional one, which predisposes the implied (feminist) reader to associate those views with Atwood herself, and to read those statements as relevant to her own situation. For example, when Offred comments that 'Whatever is silenced will clamour to be heard, though silently' (Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.161), the implied reader may see in this statement a code, a possible reference to the historical 'silencing' of women, (although it could, of course, be taken to refer to any oppressed or 'minority' group). In this case, it is the similarity between the views of implied author and implied reader which is expected to elicit a sympathetic response to the narrator. The reader who is 'willed' into existence is someone who wants to believe the narrator's perception of events, even though these are frequently, and admittedly, contradictory and confused, e.g.

I'm not sure how it happened; not exactly. All I can hope for is a reconstruction [...] (Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.275)

The frequent occurrences of comments such as these destabilise Offred's narrative and mirror her state of confusion, as will be considered further below.

In addition to the assumed symmetry between the views of the implied author and implied reader, first-person narration is often considered to be the most useful in eliciting a sympathetic response from the reader, due to the proximity to the narrator's point of view and the insight into the narrator's thoughts and feelings. It is therefore predictable that in paraphrasing *The Handmaid's Tale* I have retold events as they affect Offred, since the story is narrated by her in the first person, and it is her point of view which is privileged. Authors have at their disposal many and varied techniques with which they can attempt to manipulate a reader's response to the fictional events portrayed in the narrative. The story itself, the narrative 'proper', may be distinguished from the 'angle of telling' (Simpson, 1993:2), the way in which the author chooses to present events. The chosen mode of presentation is assumed to have the potential to bias a reader more in favour of some characters than others. Booth argues, for example, that the form of narration in *The Odyssey* is responsible for the fact that

[...] we are unambiguously sympathetic towards the heroes and contemptuous of the suitors [...] another poet, working with the same episodes but treating them from the suitors' point of view, could easily have led us into the same adventures with radically different hopes and fears. (Booth, 1961:6)

As Booth's comment shows, writings on point of view have often assumed that all readers respond favourably to the character whose point of view is privileged. The fact that one character's perspective is given priority is expected to lead inevitably to sympathy and understanding for that character, as illustrated by the above quotation, and by the following;

Access to a character's consciousness is the standard entree to his point of view, the usual and quickest means by which we come to identify with him. Learning his thoughts insures an intimate connection. (Chatman, S.1978:157)

[...] point of view conditions and codetermines the reader's response to the text. (Lanser, 1981:16)

The very exposure [...] to a character's point of view - his thoughts, emotions, experience - tends to establish an identification with that character, and an alignment with his value picture. There seems to be an inevitable association between shared experience, understanding, sympathy and shared values [...] (Leech and Short, 1981:275)

However, two issues seem to be at stake here: whether it is the fact of being exposed to a character's point of view that establishes identification and elicits a sympathetic response, or whether readers sympathise more readily with characters with whom they can already identify in some respect, an aspect which the empirical studies discussed in Chapter Two have failed to illuminate. There is no inevitable reason why the implied reader should be sympathetic towards a character whose point of view is privileged, although it is more likely that narratives which include information about a character's thoughts allow the reader to understand that character and the motivation behind his or her behaviour. The reader's need to understand characters' motives is an important part of character evaluation, as the discussion of attribution theory in Chapter Two has sought to illustrate, since the reader is thus able to assess more accurately the character's 'personality'. Informational differences have been shown to lead to differential causal attributions, and I suggested that this could be applied also to the varying types of information which are transmitted via the different narrative modes. The major difference between *Evelina* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, for example, is that the reader of the former has information from a number of sources, whereas the reader of the latter has only one source of information, Offred. Thus, while first-person narration is assumed to allow the reader to be 'closer' to the narrator, our information about other characters, events, and so on, is normally limited to just one perspective. The potential therefore for first-person narrators to be unreliable is evident, since the reader is dependent upon the narrator's interpretation of events, which may not be accurate, a perception which may have an effect on

response. While we may be able to assume the role of ‘actor’, we do not *become* the actor, and are still able to ‘step back’ and evaluate a character or narrator. As noted above, in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, for example, Offred’s narrative is destabilised, leaving the reader in some doubt as to what actually happens. However, although Offred is not totally reliable as a narrator, this is due to her own confusion rather than being a deliberate attempt to mislead the reader, and it is not necessarily the case that her unreliability renders her unsympathetic. In fact, her confusion and uncertainty may induce the reader to feel more sympathy for her, since they are a result of the dangerous society in which she lives.

A similar type of unreliability is found in the case of the elderly male narrator of Murdoch’s *The Sea, The Sea*. Charles Arrowby is a retired actor who leaves his circle of friends to live in seclusion. The novel begins life as Charles’ autobiography, but is interspersed with ‘current’ events. By coincidence, he meets his childhood sweetheart, Hartley, who left him without explanation when they were both young. Despite the discovery that Hartley has been married to her husband, Ben, for many years, Charles convinces himself that she still loves him, culminating in his forcing her to stay in his house against her will, despite her pleas to be allowed to leave. There is some doubt over the way Charles interprets Hartley’s state of mind, since the reader is provided with little evidence to support his perception that Hartley wishes to be with him instead of her husband, and his narration suggests that his interpretation of his relationship with Hartley is partly based on wishful thinking.

Hartley loved me and had long regretted losing me. How could she not? She did not love her husband. How could she? He was mentally undistinguished; there was no wit or spiritual sweetness in that man.

(Murdoch, *The Sea, The Sea*. p.158)

Unlike the self-consciously unreliable narration of the Atwood example, the narrator of Murdoch’s novel is only gradually revealed as unreliable, mainly as a

result of the contrast between his interpretation of Hartley's behaviour, and the reaction to her kidnapping by the other characters and Hartley herself. The perception of his unreliability is something which must accumulate in the reader, since initially, there is little to suggest that his perception of others is inaccurate. However, he eventually admits that he may be mistaken.

Reason said that the evidence was not conclusive, and could be read in other ways. My anti-Ben persona was perhaps not a very reliable witness.

(Murdoch, *The Sea, The Sea*. p.158)

However, although Murdoch's and Atwood's novels are similar in their utilisation of potentially unreliable first-person narrators, they differ in their potential for eliciting sympathetic responses. Offred's unreliability stems from her uncertainty about the trustworthiness of those around her. Charles' unreliability is partly a result of his arrogance; Charles' life since losing Hartley has been full of women who adore him, and to whom he refuses to commit, apparently enjoying their 'suffering' (Murdoch, *The Sea, The Sea* p.50). His perception of Hartley's feelings for him is therefore partly a result of his inability to accept that any woman could reject him. This is an aspect of his 'personality' which some readers may find unappealing, and his attitude to women is again reflected in generic statements, e.g., 'Of course, women act all the time. It is easier to judge a man.' (Murdoch, *The Sea, The Sea* p.33). Such factors, combined with his behaviour towards Hartley and her husband, have the potential to cause the reader to distance her or himself from Charles, even though he is honest about his shortcomings e.g., 'What an egoist I must seem in the preceding pages' (Murdoch, *The Sea, The Sea* p.482).

These two examples illustrate the nature of the information which is available to readers in a first-person narrative. On the one hand, the reader has access to the narrator's mind and is thus able to understand the motivation behind his or her

behaviour (a discussion of the different kinds of information concerning mental processes follows in section 3.8). However, the potential for such information to alienate the reader is apparent in my reading of the ‘personality’ of Charles Arrowby. On the other hand, the subjectivity of the narration, due to the fact that usually only one perspective is available, means that first-person narrators can be unreliable. In addition, it is not necessarily the case that the relationship between first-person narration and response is as straightforward as writings about point of view suggest. The reader’s response to unreliable narrators may therefore be affected by their evaluation of their ‘personalities’ and may vary during the reading process.

If first-person narration is the most limited and subjective in informational terms, then third-person narration is potentially the most informative. However, third-person narration also varies in the way in which information is presented to the reader, as will be discussed next.

3. 3 Third-Person Narration

Potentially the most informative form of narration is that which utilises a third-person ‘omniscient’ narrator, i.e., a narrator who has access to all the ‘facts’, including the thoughts and feelings of one or more of the characters. Such a narrator may also be unreliable however, as will be discussed below. Third-person narratives may include a narrator who is more or less intrusive, ranging from the kind of narrative which appears to ‘tell itself’, to those that include a narrator who guides the reader through the events. In the latter example, the narrator role has potentially similar problems to that of a first-person narrator; by intruding, the narrator foregrounds his or her opinions and therefore invites the reader to question the ‘objectivity’ of the narration, as will be discussed below.

McCullers' novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* utilises an omniscient narrator who is 'neutral' in the sense that she or he does not 'intrude' into the narrative, and provides insights into all of the characters without 'commenting' on them or interpreting their behaviour. The novel begins with a description of the relationship between Singer and Antonapoulos, two deaf mute men who communicate by sign language. When the two friends become separated, Singer is left alone and unable to communicate his feelings to anyone, although, ironically, all of the other characters confide in Singer, believing that despite (because of) his silence he understands them perfectly. The beginning of the novel illustrates the way in which the apparently neutral style of narration suits the theme of non-communication, with facts stated baldly and without comment.

The two mutes had no other friends, and except when they worked they were alone together. Each day was very much like any other day, because they were alone so much that nothing ever disturbed them. Once a week they would go to the library for Singer to withdraw a mystery book and on Friday night they attended a movie. Then on payday they always went to the ten-cent photograph shop above the Army and Navy Store so that Antonapoulos could have his picture taken. These were the only places where they made customary visits. There were many parts in the town that they had never even seen. (McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.3)

Unlike the subjective first-person narration described above, this extract lacks any information concerning the motivation behind the characters' actions. The narration presents an impression of them as they might appear to others as they go about their weekly routine. As the novel proceeds however, the narration is interspersed with insights into Singer's thoughts and provides information which allows the reader to understand how much he depends upon his conversations with Antonapoulos. The form of narration at the beginning of the novel is particularly appropriate for reinforcing a) the sense of the separateness of the two men from the rest of the community, since their communication with each other is silent and is not

understood by any of the other characters, and b) Singer's need for communication with Antonapoulos. In addition, each of the other major characters has text space devoted to their inner thoughts, allowing the reader to contrast their perception of Singer - they believe he is someone who understands them - with the way he is 'really'; he finds them 'incomprehensible' (McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.169). This may be compared with the *Evelina* example discussed above; although Singer is a major character in the novel, and the central link between the other characters, he is not the sole focus of the story. The stories of the other characters are interwoven with his, and the information which is provided allows the reader to understand the motivation behind the behaviour of *all* of the characters, rather than being information which supports the impression of only one.

The characters never manage to communicate their real thoughts or feelings to one another or to Singer, and remain as distant from one another at the end of the novel as they are at the beginning. Unable to communicate his own feelings and needs to anyone, Singer is driven to despair by the demands of the other characters, and eventually commits suicide, an event which is made more shocking by the matter-of-fact way in which it is narrated.

Singer left his luggage in the middle of the station floor. Then he walked to the shop. He greeted the jeweller for whom he worked with a listless turn of his hand. When he went out again there was something heavy in his pocket. For a while he rambled with bent head along the streets. But the unrefracted brilliance of the sun, the humid heat, oppressed him. He returned to his room with swollen eyes and an aching head. After resting he drank a glass of iced coffee and smoked a cigarette. Then when he had washed the ash tray and the glass he brought out a pistol from his pocket and put a bullet in his chest.
(McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.258)

An author is thus able to manipulate the degree of information which is provided, revealing the characters' thoughts to allow understanding when desired, but withholding information for shock value. The withholding of information is also

possible in first-person narration, of course, but not the ability to provide information about the inner thoughts and feelings of the other characters, nor is it possible to describe one's own successful suicide (although theoretically, it *is* possible for first-person narrators to describe their own dying sensations, as will be discussed with examples in section 3.5 below).

In McCullers' novel, the third-person narrator is almost completely effaced, and it would be difficult to attribute any opinion of the characters to him or her. The reader's evaluation of the characters is based on the way their 'personalities' are revealed through their inner thoughts, and their opinions about the world they inhabit are entirely associated with them, not with the narrator. By contrast with the subjectivity of first-person narration, third-person narration can thus assume an objective or neutral stance, which may have consequences for the implied author/implied reader relationship. Due to the different perspectives offered by the various characters' respective points of view in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, and the lack of narratorial comment, it is more difficult (although probably not impossible) to attribute any of their views to the implied author.

However, generic statements can occur in third-person narratives, and may be attributed to the narrator alone, or may be assumed to echo the views of the implied author, depending on the reader's judgement of the similarity of their views and the reliability of the narrator. Austen's works are an obvious example of the type of narration which, although unintrusive, is not neutral.

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ch.1)

The implied reader recognises the irony in this ostensibly universal 'truth' which serves both to comment subtly on the characters and on life in general; thus, the

ironic tone is assumed to belong to both narrator and implied author, since Austen and irony are often seen to be synonymous. Similarly when the third-person narrator of Woolf's *Orlando* claims that

Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above. (Woolf, *Orlando*, pp.92/3)

the implied reader is likely to assume that, although the narrator is distinct from the implied author, (she or he is identified as Orlando's 'biographer'), they share the same views. Generic statements of this kind, when combined with knowledge of the implied author's opinions on certain subjects, are thus attributed by default to the implied author speaking through the narrator. Lanser notes that,

As whatever a reader knows of the author is brought to the reading of the text, the writer's and the text's authority are dynamically intertwined; either is capable of enhancing or diminishing the other'. (Lanser, 1981:85).

The mode of narration chosen therefore is one of the ways in which the author can manipulate the distance between the views expressed in the text and her implied reader. Thus, even in these examples of third-person narration there are differences; the 'objective' third-person narrator of McCullers' novel may be compared with the unintrusive but ironic narrator of Austen's, and the intrusive narrator/biographer of Woolf's *Orlando*. As noted, once a narrator intrudes and offers an opinion, she or he can be charged with similar subjectivity and unreliability as a first-person narrator. Although the views of the narrator of *Orlando* may be seen to reflect those of the implied author, this is not to overlook the fact that the narrator is given a persona which is distinct from Woolf herself, a 'biographer'; she or he is in charge of telling the facts 'as far as they are known' (Woolf, *Orlando*, p.31), a sentence which illustrates the limited information of the narrator of *Orlando*. Despite having access to Orlando's thoughts and feelings, she or he does not have all of the facts concerning

Orlando's circumstances, a device which allows Woolf to 'suspend disbelief' in the reader. Since the narrator simply states 'facts' without attempting to interpret or explain them, the reader is expected to accept that they are indisputably 'there'.

It is enough for us to state the simple fact; Orlando was a man till the age of thirty; when he became a woman and has remained so ever since. But let other pens treat of sex and sexuality; we quit such odious objects as soon as we can.
(Woolf, *Orlando*, p.68)

The narrator is apparently unable or unwilling to explain Orlando's ability to change sex spontaneously and to live for several centuries. Unlike the type of 'omniscient' narration described in the examples above, *Orlando's* narrator is limited to insights into the thoughts of only one character, Orlando him/herself. The term 'omniscient' narrator can therefore only accurately refer to those cases where the narrator has access to all of the facts (although information can be delayed or withheld by that narrator). Therefore although there may be a tendency to associate the generic statements uttered by the narrator with Woolf herself, the distinction between implied author and narrator roles is made obvious, due to the persona which the narrator exhibits, and his or her limited knowledge.

A similar example of a narrator 'with attitude' is found in Morrison's *Jazz*. The unidentified third-person narrator of this novel is not a participating character yet has a distinct persona. *Jazz* revolves around the story of Violet and Joe Trace, and tells of the couple's respective feelings concerning Joe's affair with, and subsequent murder of, a young woman named Dorcas. The narrator adopts an intimate, gossipy tone, assuming a close, informal relationship and shared knowledge with her reader, as if addressing someone who is also a part of this community. In addition to allowing access to the thoughts of all the characters involved in the action, the narrator also

provides the reader with ample evidence of her own thoughts and feelings. In the example below, she both describes and comments on Violet's thoughts.

She thinks she longs for rest, a carefree afternoon to decide suddenly to go to the pictures, or just to sit with the birdcages and listen to the children play in the snow.

This notion of rest, it's attractive to her, but I don't think she would like it. (Morrison, *Jazz*, p.16)

Despite being external to the events she is narrating, the narrator of *Jazz* is reasonably close to all of the characters and, due to her insights, the reader is potentially able to understand all of the characters and their motivations. She is able to comment on how the characters think and feel, while providing an interpretative frame which is her own view of events. Morrison's narrator is as much a fictional creation as are the characters within the story; thus her opinions express personal rather than universal truths, and can be questioned. Similarly, I have referred to the narrator as 'she', due to some of the information she provides into her own thoughts. The narration in *Jazz* again is therefore not truly omniscient, since the narrator can only express an opinion that Violet will not enjoy her 'rest'; ('I don't think she would like it'). Her opinion of Violet may be compared with the impression the reader gains of Violet herself, as revealed through the insight into Violet's thoughts.

Third-person narratives can therefore be limited to the consciousness of only one character, as in *Orlando*, or may allow the reader access to the consciousnesses of one or more characters, in equal or varying degrees, as in *Jazz*, or *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. These differences in presentation have the potential to position the reader closer to, or further away from, the narrating centre, depending on whether or not the reader is provided with insights into the consciousness of the characters. The narrator of *Jazz* is therefore less limited, in informational terms, than the narrator of *Orlando*, but not omniscient, nor objective.

The subject matter of *Jazz* highlights both the importance of the distinction between implied author and narrator roles, and the difference between first and third-person narration. Third-person narration not only offers a 'broader picture' of the effect of Joe's actions on all of the characters involved, by allowing their thoughts to be made apparent to the reader; in addition, by using a narrator who cannot be confused with Morrison herself, Morrison avoids the problem of appearing to be sympathetic towards a character who commits murder, since the reasons for Joe's actions are revealed through the access into his thoughts. As Leech and Short point out, there is a need for a distinction between author and narrator when an author writes sympathetically of a character whose views or actions are morally unacceptable.

the fact that the seducer, Humbert Humbert is given sympathetic treatment in *Lolita* does not allow us to infer that the writer, Nabokov, approves of men who take advantage of young girls. Authors may very often believe in the views which they are putting forward, but there is no necessary reason why they should [...] (Leech and Short, 1981:260)

This is true of both first and third-person narratives; the possibility of conflating implied author and narrator roles has been discussed, and I have also considered the potential effect on the implied reader. The conflation of the role of implied author and narrator in *The Handmaid's Tale* is possible due to the way in which Offred's views are apparently similar to those of the implied author. Such conflation is not as likely in *The Sea, The Sea*, although it is possible in some instances. For example, Charles' comment that

Those who are caught in mental cages can often picture freedom, it just has no attractive power. (Murdoch, *The Sea, The Sea*, p.394)

is a profound statement which could be attributed to the implied author. Whether it is assumed to belong to Charles and/or to Murdoch is dependent upon the reader's impression of the implied author. The potential for narrators to express opinions and attitudes which are unappealing or unusual will be discussed further in section 3.8.

In this section, I have considered the informational differences between first and third-person narration and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each. I have argued that first-person narration is sometimes considered to be more capable of eliciting sympathy for a narrator than third-person narration, due to the insight into the narrator's mind, and hence the ability to understand her or his motivation. I have also considered potentially unreliable narrators, and the effect of the narrator's 'personality' on (my) response, discussing factors which might persuade readers to conflate or separate implied author and narrator roles in first-person narration. I have also argued that third-person narration can provide the reader with access not only into the mind of a narrator, but also into the minds of a number of characters, thus offering information from a number of sources, rather than only one. I have considered the effect of having different types of third-person narration, ranging from an omniscient neutral narrator, to a third-person narrator with her own 'personality', suggesting that, in the latter case, the reader evaluates the third-person narrator in a similar way to his or her evaluation of first-person narrators. The preceding discussion has attempted to show that the informational differences between first and third-person narration are more varied and variable than a mere pronominal shift. I will now consider the work of Genette and Rimmon-Kenan on focalization, since this provides a useful foundation for my discussion of those frameworks which offer a systematic categorisation of narratives according to linguistic identification of point of view.

3. 4 Point of View : Narrative Mood and Focalization

In the above discussion, I have noted the potential for readers to conflate the roles of implied author and implied reader in cases where the views of both are assumed to be similar. In order to make the distinction clearer, it is possible to distinguish between the teller of the events and the perceiving entity. These may be

the same, as in *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *The Sea, The Sea*, or they may be separate, as in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, and are different in their access to information, i.e., the difference between limited and potentially unlimited information.

3. 4 (i) Genette

Genette distinguishes between narrative 'mood' and narrative 'voice', which refer respectively to 'who sees' (the character whose point of view is represented), and 'who speaks', (the narrator of those events). These may, of course, be the same entity, as in *The Handmaid's Tale*; however, the distinction becomes clearer in *Orlando*, for example, where Orlando 'sees' and the narrator 'speaks'. To adopt Genette's term therefore, Orlando becomes the 'focalizer' of the narrative but not the narrator, who has a distinct and separate personality, as noted above. Genette's term 'narrative mood' corresponds to the more usual term 'point of view', and refers to the 'regulation of narrative information' (Genette, 1980:162).

Narrative "representation," or, more exactly, narrative information, has its degrees: narrative can furnish the reader with more or fewer details, and in a more or less direct way, and can thus seem (to adopt a common and convenient spatial metaphor, which is not to be taken literally) to keep at a greater or lesser *distance* from what it tells. The narrative can also choose to regulate the information it delivers [...] according to the capacities of the knowledge of one or another participant in the story [...] (ibid.)

In common with Fowler (1986:73), Genette compares narrative positioning to the visual arts, claiming that the reader's 'vision' is determined by the amount of information granted to him or her, a vision that may be precise or 'partially obstructed' depending on the way that the reader is positioned in terms of the narrative. This is distinct from the positioning of the reader in terms of spatial point of view which will be discussed in section 3.4 below, and relates only to the notion of the 'distance' from the characters and events which is created by the narrative position adopted by the text.

In addition, Genette distinguishes between two possible ‘varieties’ of narrator: a narrator who is ‘absent’ from the story and is termed ‘heterodiegetic’, and a narrator who is also a participant in the story and is labelled ‘homodiegetic’ (Genette, 1980:244/5). Thus the story may be presented from two different narrative positions, depending on whether or not the narrator takes part in the action of the story, and which are not the same as Fowler’s notion of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ point of view to be discussed in section 3. 6. (i) below. *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* utilises a heterodiegetic narrator, whereas *The Handmaid’s Tale* is an example of a homodiegetic narrator.

In Genette’s terms, a heterodiegetic narrator may however provide an internal point of view, and a homodiegetic narrator may assume an external point of view (Simpson, 1993:54), since Genette’s terms refer only to the relationship of the narrator to the events portrayed and not to the narrator’s (lack of) inside knowledge about the characters. Narration and perspective are therefore able to be discussed separately using Genette’s distinction between narrator and focalizer, between who ‘speaks’ and who ‘sees’, with ‘focalization’ again being divided into categories according to the degree of insight allowed into the characters’ consciousnesses.

3. 4 (ii) Types of Focalization

Genette distinguishes between ‘non-focalized’ or ‘zero-focalization’, ‘internal focalization’ and ‘external focalization’. Zero-focalization accounts for those instances where the story is told from the point of view of an ‘omniscient narrator’, the narrator having access to more knowledge than the characters. An example of this may be seen in Chopin’s *The Awakening*, where the narrator initially knows more than the character. Having described the relationship between Edna Pontellier and her husband, and Edna’s developing relationship with a young man, Robert, the narration

implies that Edna is unhappy, yet her initial inability or unwillingness to understand what is making her unhappy is not shared by the narrator.

Edna Pontellier could not have told why, wishing to go to the beach with Robert, she should in the first place have declined, and in the second place have followed in obedience to one of the two contradictory impulses which impelled her.

A certain light was beginning to dawn dimly within her, - the light which, showing the way, forbids it. At that early period it served but to bewilder her. It moved her to dreams, to thoughtfulness, to the shadowy anguish which had overcome her the midnight when she had abandoned herself to tears.

In short, Mrs. Pontellier was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her. This may seem like a ponderous weight of wisdom to descend upon the soul of a young woman of twenty-eight - perhaps more wisdom than the Holy Ghost is usually pleased to vouchsafe to any woman. But the beginning of things, of a world especially, is necessarily vague, tangled, chaotic and exceedingly disturbing. How few of us ever emerge from such beginning! How many souls perish in its tumult!

(Chopin, *The Awakening*, pp.56-57)

Like the narrator of *Jazz*, the narrator's opinions are foregrounded, but without the personalisation which is a feature of Morrison's narrator, the only indication of 'personality' being the presence of exclamation marks. The narrator of *The Awakening* has knowledge of Edna's feelings, and anticipates her future actions; she or he is apparently able to see into Edna's future, and is in possession of more information at this point than the character. This type of narration may therefore be distinguished from the type of internal narration where the reader is made aware of the focalizer's feelings at the time they occur, or from the more limited internal access provided by the narrator of *Jazz* for example. This type of narration is, as Simpson suggests, more 'omniscient' than other forms of internal focalization (Simpson, 1993:34).

However, there are some problems with attempting to distinguish 'zero-focalization' from some of Genette's other categories. For example, he describes 'internal focalization' as referring to those narratives which are told through the consciousness of one or more of the characters, and which may be 'fixed', 'variable'

or 'multiple', (Genette, 1980:190). One of the characteristics of this type of narration is a concentration on the thoughts and feelings of the focalizer, often manifest in the use of 'interior monologue' (Genette, 1980:93). External focalization, by contrast, is found in cases where the 'narrator says less than the character knows' and which is, Genette claims, the most 'objective' or 'behaviorist' (Genette, 1980:189), since we have no access to the thoughts or feelings of the protagonist(s). In practice, however, texts frequently oscillate between 'internal' and 'external' focalization, and where 'multiple' or 'variable' internal viewpoints are included, it becomes difficult to decide whether these should be classified as 'internal focalization' or 'zero-focalization' as described by Genette. He does note however that

Any single formula of focalization does not [...] always bear on an entire work, but rather on a definite narrative section, which can be very short.
(Genette, 1980:191).

Additionally, Genette suggests that the 'distinction between different points of view is not always as clear as the consideration of pure types alone could lead one to believe.' (1980:191), and this becomes apparent when attempting to apply Genette's categories to specific narratives. A novel such as *Jazz*, for example, is not limited to the perspective of one character, but switches from character to character as well as into the mind of the narrator. This could therefore be termed 'variable' or, perhaps more accurately, 'multiple' focalization, yet the presence of a narrator who comments on the characters means that it more closely resembles Genette's concept of zero-focalization, offering internal focalization from a number of different perspectives. Therefore, as Simpson suggests, zero-focalization may be more usefully thought of as a type of narration which is more 'omniscient' than internal focalization, and may be used to describe those instances where narration is not limited to the knowledge of any one character or characters. It appears counter-intuitive however to label such

examples ‘zero-focalization’, since this suggests a *lack* of focalization rather than focalization from a number of perspectives. ‘Zero-focalization’ would seem to more usefully designate those cases where the narrator has no access to the minds of the characters, and which Fowler labels ‘external’ point of view, to be discussed in section 3. 6 below. Simpson notes that Genette does not offer an extensive discussion of zero-focalization, and that the notion is in fact dropped in Rimmon-Kenan’s subsequent work, which is considered in section 3. 3. (ii) below.

One other difficulty with attempting to apply Genette’s system of categorisation arises from his claim that internal focalization implies that

the focal character never be described or even referred to from the outside, and that his thoughts or perceptions never be analysed objectively by the narrator. (Genette, 1980:192).

A novel which contradicts this claim is Shields’ *The Stone Diaries*. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator/focalizer, Daisy Goodwill, tells of events at which she could not possibly have been present; the moments preceding her birth, for example, in addition to referring to herself in the third person, describing herself from the outside and analysing her own thoughts. This is illustrated by the following extract in which Daisy recalls an episode during her childhood as she is recovering from measles.

She must have slept a good deal - for how else could an active child have endured such a width of vacant time? - and whenever she woke it was with a stiff body and a head weakened by nameless anxiety. This had to do with the vacuum she sensed, suddenly, in the middle of her life. Something was missing, and it took weeks in that dim room, weeks of heavy blankets, and the image of that upside-down tree inside her chest to inform her of what it was. What she lacked was the kernel of authenticity, that precious interior ore that everyone around her seemed to possess. Aunt Clarentine with her tapping footsteps in the upstairs hall, bustling and cheerful and breaking out in laughter over nothing at all and talking away in a larky voice about how grateful she was that “God who so loved the world” had chosen to let her go her own way. And Uncle Barker, as Daisy called him in those days, setting off for the College with his diamond-willow cane in hand and his old scuffed shoes striking the pavement, purposeful in his young manly intent even while he

sighed out his reluctance. Other people were held erect by their ability to register and reflect the world - but not, for some reason, Daisy Goodwill.

She could only stare at this absence inside herself for a few minutes at a time. It was like looking at the sun.

Well, you might say, it was doubtless the fever that disoriented me, and it is true that I suffered strange delusions in that dark place, and that my swollen eyes in the twilight room invited frightening visions. The long days of isolation, of silence, the torment of boredom - all these pressed down on me, on young Daisy Goodwill and emptied her out. Her autobiography, if such a thing were imaginable, would be, if such a thing were ever to be written, an assemblage of dark voids and unbridgeable gaps.

(Shields, *The Stone Diaries*, pp.75-76)

The passage begins as apparently straightforward internal focalization, with the focalizer, Daisy, and the narrator, clearly being separate entities, i.e., Daisy 'sees' and the narrator 'speaks', thus explaining the use of the third-person to refer to Daisy. However, the switch to first-person narration and the awareness that Daisy and the narrator are one and the same person, (Daisy the adult narrates her childhood experiences) illustrates the way in which an author can 'violate' the rules, using the third-person in this instance to refer to her younger self. Strictly speaking, the narrator is neither heterodiegetic nor homodiegetic; alternatively, she is both. The relationship between narrator and character is in this respect 'variable or floating' (Genette, 1980:246) and the use of either third or first person indicates differing degrees of distance. Both the disorientating effect of Daisy's illness, and the distance from her child-self, are emphasised by the utilisation of the third-person pronoun. Daisy is able to refer to herself in the third-person and both narrate and analyse her feelings due to the special nature of retrospective narratives; she is both the same as, and different from, the child Daisy recovering from measles, and her language reflects this. Daisy the child focalizer who describes her Aunt and Uncle as they go about their daily business can only feel a 'nameless anxiety'; it is the adult Daisy who labels this feeling as a lack of a 'kernel of authenticity'. Genette refers to such shifts described

above as ‘violations’ (Genette, 1980:246), yet there is obviously no reason why a narrator cannot behave as Daisy does. Retrospective narratives are obviously a special case, and will be discussed further in section 3.3.(ii) below.

3. 4 (iii) Rimmon-Kenan

Following on from Genette, Rimmon-Kenan adopts the term ‘focalization’; however in her discussion, focalization includes ‘cognitive, emotive and ideological orientation’ and is divided into ‘external’ and ‘internal’ focalization. The ‘cognitive component’ and ‘the emotive component’ are used by Rimmon-Kenan to describe those features which relate to the mind and emotions. They are subsumed under the more general heading of ‘the psychological facet’, ‘the cognitive and the emotive orientation of the focalizer towards the focalized.’ (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:79) .

‘Internal focalization’ is used to describe those instances where the ‘locus’ is ‘inside the represented events’ and usually takes the form of a character-focalizer. External focalization is defined as being ‘close to the narrating agent’, referred to as the ‘narrator-focalizer’ (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:71), but can also occur in first-person narratives where

the temporal and psychological distance between narrator and character is minimal [...] or when the perception through which the story is rendered is that of the narrating self rather than that of the experiencing self.
(Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:74)

Rimmon-Kenan’s distinction between internal and external focalizers therefore corresponds to Genette’s distinction between ‘homodiegetic’ and ‘heterodiegetic’ narrators, and relates to the position of the focalizer to the events portrayed. She further distinguishes between ‘focalizer’ and ‘focalized’ to refer to the fact that focalization has both a ‘subject’ and an ‘object’.

The subject (the ‘focalizer’) is the agent whose perception orients the presentation, whereas the object (the ‘focalized’) is what the focalizer

perceives. (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:74)

In addition, 'An external focalizer may perceive an object either from without or within' and 'an internal focalizer may perceive the object from within' or may be 'confined to the outward manifestations of the focalized.' (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:76). Thus a narrator can be external or internal to the story, and can grant varying degrees of information to the reader concerning the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Rimmon-Kenan notes that in 'cognitive' terms, 'the opposition between external and internal focalization becomes that between unrestricted and restricted knowledge' (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:79). External focalization has access to all aspects of the story, and in the case of external focalization from within, access also to the thoughts and feelings of the characters. In this respect, Rimmon-Kenan's 'External focalization from within' corresponds to the type of narration typically labelled 'omniscient'; describing such examples as 'external' seems therefore to be a misnomer, rather like Genette's concept of 'zero-focalization', since both terms imply *limited*, rather than *unlimited* access to all aspects of the story. Using Rimmon-Kenan's terms, the type of narration found in *Jazz* would be labelled 'external from within', with the 'focalized' referring to the other characters. However, intuitively, the narrator 'feels' as if she is internal to the story, since her perceptions 'colour' the narrative. Alternatively, Rimmon-Kenan describes the difference between external and internal focalizers in informational terms, between 'unrestricted and restricted information', the difference, I have argued between third-and first-person narration. However, such a distinction does not really apply in the case of *Orlando*, for example, whose narrator does not have all the 'facts' concerning Orlando's sex change and longevity.

There are other difficulties in applying Rimmon-Kenan's distinctions, which are complicated by the fact that she chooses to illustrate her discussion with an

example from a first-person retrospective narrative, Joyce's *Araby*. She argues that the adult narrator who talks about himself as a child uses language which is

‘coloured’ by his perceptions at the time of narration (external focalization), sometimes by those of his younger self (internal focalization), and sometimes remains ambiguous between the two. (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:83)

Such factors are present in the extract from *The Stone Diaries* quoted above, where the adult Daisy as narrator is external to the events described but the events are ‘coloured’ by her perceptions as a child. However, to suggest that this is an example of narration switching between external and internal focalization is to neglect the overall internal ‘feel’ of the passage. Rimmon-Kenan comments further that

If the focalizer is a character [...] then his acts of perception are part of the story. If he is the narrator, focalization is just one of the many rhetorical strategies at his disposal. (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:85)

Yet I have already noted that in *Jazz*, the narrator's perceptions are also part of the story. Similarly, in the case of retrospective narration, the focalizer is both character and narrator, which allows the author many possibilities to ‘play around’ with the narrative potential of focalization. Rimmon-Kenan points out that in such instances, focalization and narration remain separate, and that

As far as focalization is concerned, there is no difference between third-person centre of consciousness and first-person retrospective narration. In both, the focalizer is a character within the represented world. The only difference between the two is the identity of the narrator. (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:73)

In theoretical terms this may be true, yet differences do emerge between the two which are a *result* of the fact that the identity of the character and the narrator are the same, as I hope to illustrate below. Like Genette, Rimmon-Kenan suggests that a ‘test’ for internal focalization is to attempt to ‘rewrite’ the given segment in the first-person. If this is not feasible, then it is likely that the focalization is external. This helps to illustrate the intuitively ‘internal’ feel of such retrospective narratives as

described above; rewriting Daisy Stone's childhood experiences in the first-person indicates that the 'locus' of the narration is indeed 'inside the represented events'.

I must have slept a good deal - for how else could an active child have endured such a width of vacant time? - and whenever I woke it was with a stiff body and a head weakened by nameless anxiety. This had to do with the vacuum I sensed, suddenly, in the middle of my life.

However, if we consider the example from *The Awakening* given above, it becomes apparent that there is a difference between first-person retrospective narration and third-person centre of consciousness. Theoretically, it would have been possible to achieve a similar effect by allowing an older Edna Pontellier to describe retrospectively her own earlier 'awakening', as in the extract below.

I could not have told why, wishing to go to the beach with Robert, I should in the first place have declined, and in the second place have followed in obedience to one of the two contradictory impulses which impelled me. A certain light was beginning to dawn dimly within me, - the light which, showing the way, forbids it. At that early period it served but to bewilder me. It moved me to dreams, to thoughtfulness, to the shadowy anguish which had overcome me the midnight when I had abandoned myself to tears.

In short, I was beginning to realize my position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize my relations as an individual to the world within and about me. This may seem like a ponderous weight of wisdom to descend upon the soul of a young woman of twenty-eight - perhaps more wisdom than the Holy Ghost is usually pleased to vouchsafe to any woman.

But the beginning of things, of a world especially, is necessarily vague, tangled, chaotic and exceedingly disturbing. How few of us ever emerge from such beginning! How many souls perish in its tumult!

Re-writing the extract does, as Rimmon-Kenan suggests, demonstrate that the extract is internally focalized. However, the comments contained in the last paragraph now belong to the narrator/focalizer/character and not to a third-person narrator; the roles have been collapsed so that the generic statements now belong to Edna. In the original, the framing of Edna's viewpoint within that of the narrator allows the narrator to comment on Edna and her situation (i.e., 'external narration from within'). In addition, in the original extract, the narrator addresses a reader who is similarly 'awakened'; 'How few of us' assumes an 'ingroup' to which Edna does not yet

belong. In the rewritten extract, the 'us' now includes Edna, since she is the older narrator telling of her own awakening. Conversion of the passage into first-person narration results in a similar kind of retrospective viewpoint to that previously discussed; this time, the narrator's previous internal perspective is framed within the more knowledgeable viewpoint of her reflective older self. The rewritten extract has the advantage of a 'more internal' point of view than that of the original, since the views expressed are now those of the character/focalizer-narrator. Although the identity of the narrator and the character-focalizer are the same in first-person retrospective narratives, their access to knowledge differs. In Rimmon-Kenan's terminology, this is also 'external narration from within', since the narrator remains distinct from the younger self whose perceptions 'colour' the narrative. Arguably however, this kind of first-person retrospective narration offers a more sympathetic vantage point than that afforded by the third-person omniscient narrator of the original, due to the obvious fact that, as in real-life, characters can be assumed to be more sympathetic towards their own younger selves than towards another person. In addition, since in the re-written version the identity of the focalizer and the narrator is the same, the narration seems to carry more authority, since we are usually more qualified to present information about our own feelings than about those of someone else. For example, in the re-written, retrospective version, Edna discusses the bewilderment of her younger self, faced with contradictory impulses and coming to terms with her place as 'an individual' in the world. This is narrated with the benefit of hindsight, since the older Edna knows the reasons for those contradictory impulses; namely that she is in love with a man who is not her husband. Thus, her narration attempts to convey her feelings as she experienced them at that time. By contrast, a

third-person narrator *withholds* this information from the reader, who must later realise, (probably earlier than Edna herself), that she is in love with Robert.

However, Edna's 'awakening' also leads to despair at her situation and results in her eventual suicide, which presents problems for an 'internal narration from within', even though, in theory, it is not impossible for narration to continue after the 'death' of a focalizer, as will be illustrated by examples from *The Stone Diaries* to be discussed next. The impression of Edna's suicide by drowning in *The Awakening* is produced by an 'external narration from within' in Rimmon-Kenan's terms, and it is with Edna's final sensations that the narration ceases.

She looked into the distance, and the old terror flamed up for an instant, then sank again. Edna heard her father's voice and her sister Margaret's. She heard the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurs of the cavalry officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odour of pinks filled the air.

(Chopin, *The Awakening*, p.176)

Again, transposing the narration into the first-person ('internal narration from within') does not significantly alter the effect, since the novel ends with these sensations and there is no more narrative after Edna's death. Similarly, Daisy's death in *The Stone Diaries* is recorded in the third-person (external focalization from 'within'), interrupted by a brief, unsettling, return to first-person narration which occurs in the middle of the conversations taking place among her family, who are looking through Daisy's belongings.

"Remember how sometimes she'd just want to lie down on her bed in the middle of the day. Not sleeping, she'd just lie there looking at the ceiling."

"Keeping it all in her head. Remembering."

"I know."

"Oh, God."...

I'm still here, inside the (powdery, splintery) bones, ankles, the sockets of my eyes, shoulder, hip, teeth, I'm still here, oh, oh.

"If she'd lived in another age she might have been Ms Green Thumb with her own TV show." (Shields, *The Stone Diaries*, pp.351/2)

The remainder of the narration proceeds in external focalization from 'without', recording a list of Daisy's addresses, the closing benediction at her memorial service, and a snatch of conversation presumably overheard at the same service or at her funeral. The fact that the internal perspective ceases with Daisy's death has a similar effect to that found in *The Awakening*, since it is Daisy as focalizer and narrator who has provided (most of) the narration from 'within', her death leaves the reader with only the 'outward manifestation of the focalized' (Rimmon-Kenan, 176), or 'external narration from without'. The way in which the author exploits the narrative potential of focalization in this novel provides an illusion that Daisy could still be aware of events taking place, even though we know it is not possible for dead people to write novels.

The case of retrospective narration thus illustrates the need for a distinction between narrator and focalizer, but also illustrates the difficulty in *only* making the distinction between internal and external narration. In addition, although Rimmon-Kenan argues that there is no difference between third-person narration and first-person retrospective narration, this only seems to be true with regard to the narration of feelings. With descriptions, by contrast, there arises a fundamental difference between first and third-person narration 'from within' which stems from the obvious subjectivity of the former. While it is quite possible for third-person narrators to relate the feelings and thoughts of characters *and* to describe them from the outside, it is less easy for first-person narrators to describe themselves, without also implying something about their own 'personalities'. Another example from *The Awakening* may serve to illustrate this point.

The charm of Edna Pontellier's physique stole imperceptibly upon you. The lines of her body were long, clean and symmetrical; it was a body which occasionally fell into splendid poses; there was no suggestion of the trim, stereotyped fashion-plate about it. (Chopin, *The Awakening*, p.58)

Combined with frequent insights into Edna's feelings, the description in the third-person serves to accentuate her appeal and to reinforce the potential for a sympathetic response to her. This changes however when translated into the first-person.

The charm of my physique stole imperceptibly upon you. The lines of my body were long, clean and symmetrical; it was a body which occasionally fell into splendid poses; there was no suggestion of the trim, stereotyped fashion-plate about it.

The description now suggests narcissism and vanity, since only someone who has studied her own reflection at length could be aware of how she looked in different poses. In addition, by allowing the character to speak praisingly about herself, the narration loses the more objective opinion of the third-person narration. In short, the narration takes a more subjective form, and relates now to Edna's own opinion of her appearance and how she perceives its effect on others. The change into first-person narration in this instance serves if anything to make the reader less sympathetic towards Edna. There is a difference between the two forms therefore which stems from the greater subjectivity of first-person narration even when narrator and focalizer are distinct fictional devices sharing one identity. First-person narrators cannot provide an objective 'external' view of themselves, thus illustrating the more limited perspective of first-person narratives. There are subtle differences therefore between first-person and third-person centre of consciousness narratives which have the potential to produce different responses from the reader.

Useful as the concept of focalization is, there are some difficulties with the terms employed by Rimmon-Kenan, as there are with Genette's earlier work. While it is useful to be able to distinguish between who 'sees' and who 'speaks', the framework itself becomes confusing when attempting to decide whether focalization

should be considered 'variable' or 'multiple', in Genette's terms, while the labels 'zero-focalization' and 'external focalization' seem at odds with the types of narration they are intended to describe.

Since this section has considered the relationship between 'seeing' and 'speaking', I will now consider the spatial position from which a narrative is told, and the way in which the events are positioned in respect of time, areas which are normally discussed under the terms 'spatial' and temporal' point of view. The discussion draws on the contributions of Fowler (1986, 1996) and Simpson (1993), whose frameworks are the subject of sections 3.6 and 3.7. However, since spatial and temporal point of view are concerned with the position of the narrator relevant to the events of the story, and relate to physical positioning, they are relevant to the discussion above concerning informational differences between first and third- person narration. In addition to spatial and temporal point of view, I will also refer to 'ideological' point of view; however I will concentrate on the reflection of ideology in the text which results from the period and setting of the writing, rather than being a representation of the ideology (ies) of the character(s) or narrator. This aspect will be discussed in section 3. 5. (iii) in my consideration of the representation of mental processes.

3. 5 Spatial, Temporal and Ideological Point of View

The discussion so far has considered the informational differences between first and third-person narratives, arguing that the former is more limited and subjective, as a result of being filtered through the perception of the character/narrator. Related to these aspects is the notion of spatial point of view, the 'viewing position' from which a narrative is told, which Fowler compares to the visual arts; some things are seen in 'close up', some distanced. (Fowler, 1986:128). Whereas a first-person

narrator is usually limited in terms of spatial perspective, and temporally to synchronous events, a third-person narrator can provide a 'panoramic' or 'simultaneous' perspective, providing information about events in different places and times (i.e. past, present and future, in the case of the omniscient narrator).

3. 5 (i) Spatial and Temporal Point of view

An example of the kind of 'panoramic' viewpoint which can be provided by an omniscient narrator is found at the beginning of Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, (referred to above in section 2.4.ii) The following extract illustrates Simpson's claim that this kind of narration allows a 'bird's-eye view' or floating viewpoint' (Simpson, 1993:63).

The full African moon poured down its light from the blue sky into the wide, lonely plain. The dry, sandy earth, with its coating of stunted 'karroo' bushes a few inches high, the low hills that skirted the plain, the milk-bushes with their long, finger like leaves, all were touched by a weird and an almost oppressive beauty as they lay in the white light.

In one spot only was the solemn monotony of the plain broken. Near the centre a small, solitary 'kopje' rose. Alone it lay there, a heap of round iron-stones piled one upon another, as over some giant's grave. Here and there a few tufts of grass or small succulent plants had sprung up among its stones, and on the very summit a clump of prickly-pears lifted their thorny arms, and reflected, as from mirrors, the moonlight on their broad, fleshy leaves. At the foot of the 'kopje' lay the homestead. First, the stone-walled 'sheep-kraals' and Kaffir huts; beyond them the dwelling house - a square red-brick building with thatched roof. Even on its bare red walls, and the wooden ladder that led up to the loft, the moonlight cast a kind of dreamy beauty, and quite etherealized the low brick wall that ran before the house, and which enclosed a bare patch of sand and two straggling sun-flowers. On the zinc roof of the great open wagon-house, on the roofs of the outbuildings that jutted from its side, the moonlight glinted with a quite peculiar brightness, till it seemed that every rib in the metal was of burnished silver.

Sleep ruled everywhere, and the homestead was not less quiet than the solitary plain.

In the farm-house, on her great wooden bedstead, Tant' Sannie, the Boer-woman, rolled heavily in her sleep.

(Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm*, p.35)

The unrestricted viewpoint allows the heterodiegetic narrator to present a panoramic description from a position somewhere above the homestead. The

moonlight pours 'into' the plain, highlighting the landscape which extends from the plain to the hills, but returns to centre on the dwelling. The deictics suggest first an impression of distance' i.e., 'it lay there', and randomness, 'Here and there a few tufts of grass', before becoming more focused; 'First the stonewalled sheep-kraals' 'beyond them the dwelling-house', moving gradually closer to the farm house; 'the low brick wall that ran before the house, and which enclosed a bare patch of sand and two straggling sun-flowers.' The viewpoint has thus changed from panoramic, to a position which is closer and more keenly focused on the dwelling place. The narration includes evaluative adjectives (e.g. 'lonely', 'stunted', 'weird', 'oppressive', 'solemn monotony') which serve to produce a mysterious atmosphere, and emphasises the loneliness of the landscape and the contrasting potential welcome of the homestead. The viewing position initially emphasises the distance of the narrator from the homestead and its inhabitants, producing an impression such as that which might be experienced by a stranger coming upon the farm for the first time. In addition, the language forces the reader to read slowly, due to the presence of words with two and three syllables. The extract may be contrasted with the beginning of Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, where the preponderance of categorical assertions produces a repetition of words with single syllables, reminiscent of the narrative form associated with folk-lore or children's fairy tales.

In a country there was a shire, and in that shire there was a town, and in that town there was a house, and in that house there was a room, and in that room there was a bed, and in that bed there lay a little girl; wide awake and longing to get up. (Gaskell, *Wives and Daughters*, p.35)

In both extracts, a similar spatial effect is achieved, as the point of view decreases in distance, moving closer to the dwelling place which will form the centre of the narrative, and, subsequently, both narratives move 'inside' the minds of the characters. The two extracts may also be compared in terms of temporal point of view,

the different impressions they provide in respect of the time dimension. In the former example, the temporal aspect interacts with the spatial dimension to provide an impression of the narrator standing motionless, gazing at the scene below, and the gradually narrowing focus, from panoramic viewpoint to specific detail, is consistent with a gradual movement towards the farm. In the latter example, by contrast, the rapidly co-ordinating phrases and indefinite article 'a', simultaneously suggest speed and vagueness i.e., this could be *any* shire, town, house, or little girl.

A similar effect is found in the following extract from *The Handmaid's Tale*. Offred's narrative contains, in Fowler's terms, 'flashbacks', as Offred remembers her previous life. The narration sometimes moves from past to present tenses as the narrator combines narration of present events with remembrances of times past. Typically, Offred's present gives an impression of time moving slowly, reflecting the boredom and loneliness of Offred's present life, and may be contrasted with episodes where Offred remembers her previous life. The following extract is her remembrance of a time when she and her family are attempting to evade capture, and again the coordinating conjunctions help to provide an impression events moving rapidly.

Then Luke got back into the car, too fast, and turned the key and reversed [...] And then he began to drive very quickly, and after that there was the dirt road and the woods and we jumped out of the car and began to run.

(Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.237)

3. 5 (ii) Ideological Point of View

In addition to the spatial and temporal aspects referred to above, the extract from *Story of an African Farm* can also help to illustrate 'ideological' point of view, and brings us full circle to the relationship outlined at the beginning of Chapter Two, in which the author must attempt, in Booth's terms, to 'eliminate the distance', between herself and her implied reader. As noted in section 2. 4 (ii), terms such as

‘Kaffir’ and ‘Boer’ are assumed to be familiar to the reader, who therefore infers something about the inhabitants of the dwelling and the relationship between them, due to his or her knowledge of South African history and culture. Ideology can thus be *reflected* in the text, i.e., can be seen to be a representation the way things are in a society at a particular time. As such, the novel reproduces certain ways of thinking which are dominant (Simpson, 1993:5), and Schreiner’s text assumes that the relationships which are portrayed between black and white are familiar and ‘common-sense’. By contrast, the relationship between men and women is problematized in Schreiner’s novel, and results in her work being hailed as an early feminist text. Thus, the ideologies of some of the characters are made explicit, and can be seen as an attempt by the author to communicate a message. This distinction may become clearer on examination of the following extract from *Story of an African Farm*. In this example, the kindly German overseer of the farm is dismissed for something he has not done. Seeking to understand what has happened, he asks a black woman, a person he considers to be friendly towards him, for information.

‘But what then is the matter? What may have happened since I left?,’ said the German, turning to the Hottentot woman who sat upon the step.

She was his friend; she would tell him kindly the truth.

The woman answered by a loud, ringing laugh.

‘Give it him, old missus! Give it him!’

It was so nice to see the white man who had been master hunted down. The coloured woman laughed, and threw a dozen mealie grains into her mouth to chew. (Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm*. p.90)

The contrast between the words spoken and the characters’ thoughts illustrates the overseer’s misconception of his relationship with the woman. His perception of her as a ‘friend’ and ‘kindly’, and her perception of him as her white ‘master’ shows a clash of views. Ideological point of view is also reflected in the various descriptions of

the characters according to their racial characteristics, i.e., 'German', 'Hottentot', 'white man', 'coloured woman'. Fowler notes that

A proliferation of terms in some semantic field indicates an unusual preoccupation with a part of the culture's or the writer's experience.
(Fowler, 1996:219)

and it is not surprising that such terms are foregrounded in Schreiner's novel. Her use of language reflects the ideology of her society, in which members are classified according to racial characteristics. While it is true that issues of race are tangential to the story, Schreiner's focus being mainly on the position of the women characters, her writing reflects the ideology of the time and illustrates the apparent inability of the different races to integrate. In terms of ideological point of view, the novel is a complex mixture of power relationships, reflecting differences in status between Boer and German, black and white, men and women, but only consciously addresses the last.

The extract above therefore illustrates the way in which ideology can be reflected in the text, or can be symptomatic of a world view which is dominant at the time of writing. However, ideological point of view can be extended to encompass the way in which the ideologies of the characters can be represented as distinct from the implied author and/or one another, an issue which will be discussed further in section 3. 9 below.

The above discussion has considered the informational differences between first and third-person narration, and the potential advantages and disadvantages of each. In addition, I have discussed the way in which a narrative can present spatial, and temporal point of view, and reflect the ideological point of view of the time of writing. I have referred to the work of Genette and Rimmon-Kenan, and the way in which they categorise the different types of focalization, considering the distinction

between ‘seeing’ and ‘speaking’. However, it becomes apparent that a more rigorous framework is needed to cope with complex narrative situations, such as those found in *Jazz* or *The Stone Diaries*. Fowler’s categories (Fowler, 1996) provide a simpler and more intuitively appealing means of attempting to describe point of view. Fowler’s discussion is based on identification of different narrative types according to linguistic criteria. The discussion is thus progressing from a concentration on narrative classification which merely distinguishes between first and third-person narration, through a distinction between focalizer and focalized, to a much closer focus on the linguistic elements which enable us to identify the *source* of the focalization. I will now consider the models of analysis suggested by Fowler and its subsequent re-working by Simpson.

3. 6 Linguistic Identification of Point of View

While the contributions of Genette and Rimmon-Kenan add another dimension to the narrative framework, noting the distinction between focalizer and focalized, Fowler’s (1996) framework is an attempt to distinguish among the narrative types systematically according to the different linguistic elements which typify certain types of narration.

In Rimmon-Kenan’s discussion, ‘internal’ and ‘external’ focalization refer to the position of the narrator relative to the story, and correspond more accurately to Genette’s distinction between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators, not to the degree of access to the focalizer’s consciousness, as might be assumed. As a result, the terms are somewhat confusing. By contrast, Fowler uses the terms ‘internal’ and ‘external’ point of view to distinguish between those narratives which allow access to the character’s minds and those which do not, and in this respect seems more easily

applicable. From this point on therefore, ‘internal’ and ‘external’ will be used in Fowler’s sense.

3. 6 (i) Fowler : Internal and External Point of View

Fowler’s system of categorisation includes ‘psychological’ point of view, the way in which the narrative presents the inner workings of the characters’ minds (or fails to do so). I will discuss this category first, as it is this aspect of point of view which has most potential for influencing readers’ responses. Linked to this is the ‘ideological’ category, and I have already considered the way in which the text may reflect ideological point of view. However, the ideologies of the characters may also be represented distinct from that of the text and/or the narrator and each other. Fowler terms this ‘world-view’, the way in which the representation of their mental processes reflects the characters’ attitudes and beliefs, an aspect which is potentially influential in terms of reader response.

As noted above, Fowler’s system of categorisation is more closely linked to the identification of linguistic elements, in order to identify the source of the narration. Such elements include modality, *verba sentiendi* (words of feeling), generic sentences, verbs of knowledge prediction or evaluation (Fowler, 1996: 167). These elements will be discussed more fully during my discussion of the fictional extracts with which I will exemplify Fowler’s narrative types.

Fowler’s distinction between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ point of view is divided into four different categories which can be used to describe the way in which ‘psychological’ point of view is represented (or not). Psychological point of view corresponds to Genette’s and Rimmon-Kenan’s concept of focalization, and relates to the character or narrator who ‘sees’, which may or may not be the same as the narrator who ‘speaks’. ‘Internal’ point of view therefore refers to those narratives which

include information about the characters' mental processes, and is divided into two categories, Types 'A' and 'B'. Internal Type A corresponds to Rimmon-Kenan's 'internal narration from within', and designates the type of narration which is

from a point of view within a character's consciousness, manifesting his or her feelings about, and evaluations of, the events and characters of the story.
(Fowler, 1996:170)

The type of narrative situation found in *The Handmaid's Tale* is Internal Type A, as the first-person narrator expresses her opinions and evaluations of the other characters and events. Fowler notes that, as a result, there may be *verba sentiendi* ('words of feeling', Fowler, 1996:171), and foregrounded modality, i.e.,

the grammar of explicit comment, the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their views on the desirability or otherwise of the states of affairs referred to.
(Fowler, 1996:166-167)

Fowler's Type A also includes third-person narration which is 'strongly coloured with personal markers of the character's world-view' (Fowler, 1996:179).

Internal Type B narration is

narration from the point of view of someone who is not a participating character but who has knowledge of the feelings of the characters - the so-called 'omniscient' author (Fowler, 1996:170)

The type of narration found in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, for example, is Internal Type B; the modality of the narrator is not foregrounded as in first-person narration, and the focus is on the characters' 'mental processes, feelings and perceptions', again reflected in the presence of *verba sentiendi* (Fowler, 1996:173).

'External' point of view also falls into two categories, Types 'C' and 'D'.

External Type C is the most 'impersonal' type of narration, being

narration from a position outside of any of the protagonists' consciousnesses with no privileged access to their private feelings and opinions.
(Fowler, 1996:170)

External Type C offers an 'objective' report of events, in as much as the narration does not provide any information which an ordinary observer might not see, and corresponds to Rimmon-Kenan's 'external focalization from without'. An example is the beginning of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* discussed above, (although it is not consistent throughout), and is marked by the *absence of verba sentiendi*, focusing on the characters' actions, rather than on their feelings. This was noted in the narration of Singer's suicide; information about Singer's thoughts and feelings is withheld in order to create a sense of shock at his actions.

External Type D stresses 'the limitations of authorial knowledge, the inaccessibility of the characters' ideologies' (Fowler, 1996:170), thereby emphasising the fact that the narrator is interpreting the behaviour of the characters rather than being privy to their thoughts. Type D narration may include the use of generic sentences and evaluative adjectives, and such 'words of estrangement', as 'apparently', 'evidently', 'it seemed', 'as if', etc. The emphasis in this type of narration is thus on an 'outside' observation of characters, and Fowler argues that

These expressions pretend that the author - or often, one character observing another - does not have access to the feelings or thoughts of the characters. They emphasise an act of interpretation, an attempt to reconstruct the psychology of the character by reference to the signs that can be gleaned by external observation. (Fowler, 1996:178).

This adds an additional dimension to Rimmon-Kenan's 'external narration from without', since the narrator not only has no access to the inner thoughts of the characters, but emphasises this fact through the use of estranged language and conjecture. Fowler's framework thus works on a principle which distinguishes among the categories according to the *degree of distance* between who 'sees' and who 'speaks', i.e., between focalizer and narrator, and makes the distinction according to

linguistic criteria. Each of these types of narration will be discussed in detail with examples below.

3. 6 (ii) Internal Types A and B

‘Psychological’ point of view overlaps with ‘ideological’ point of view, since the language used by a narrator or character indicates his or her beliefs and attitudes, thereby reflecting her or his ‘world-view’ (Fowler, 1996:213). A character’s or narrator’s beliefs and attitudes may be made ‘explicit’, or may be ‘symptomatic’ of world view (Fowler, 1996:168). I have discussed the assumption that first-person narration is the most effective in eliciting a sympathetic response from the reader. Fowler suggests that an internal point of view can make even the actions of an ‘unsympathetic’ character ‘motivated and comprehensible’ (Fowler, 1986:146). There is assumed to be a clash between a potentially compassionate response occasioned by closeness to the point of view of a character/narrator whose actions are undesirable in some respect, and shared moral values which would cause most people to condemn immoral or undesirable actions in a real life context. Such an example is found in the case of the female narrator of Winterson’s *Sexing the Cherry*, discussed above in relation to mind-style; although Dog-woman’s world-view probably differs from the reader’s, her actions are comprehensible and reasonable according to her own rules, and consequently, may be more acceptable than might be the case if narrated from an external perspective. However her language also illustrates an unusual world-view, in which may have the effect of alienating some readers. The assumption that sympathy is aroused in Type A narratives due to the proximity to the narrator’s viewpoint is debatable therefore, due to the fact that, in this instance, some of her attitudes and beliefs are probably alien to the implied reader.

Fowler's Internal Type B refers to those narratives which allow the reader access to the minds of the characters, but in this case, the internal perspective is framed within that of the external (i.e., heterodiegetic) narrator. Internal Type B is exemplified by Walker's *Meridian*. Walker's novel is set in the sixties, the era of the civil rights movement in America and, among other things, charts issues of racial tension between black and white people. As the characters attempt to come to terms with their racial and sexual identities, their inner thoughts reveal their prejudices, and are commented on by the third-person narrator. In the extract below, Meridian muses on the relationships between the black and white inhabitants of her home town.

Who would dream, in her home town, of kissing a white girl? Who would want to? What were they good for? What did they do? They only seemed to hang about laughing, after school, until when they were sixteen or seventeen they got married. Their pictures appeared in the society column, you saw them pregnant a couple of times. Then you were no longer able to recognize them as girls you once "knew". They sank into permanent oblivion. One never heard of them doing anything that was interesting [...]

Of course Meridian appropriated all the good qualities of black women to herself, now that she was awake enough to be aware of them.

(*Meridian*, pp.105/106)

Although this is third-person narration, Meridian's perceptual point of view is highlighted; e.g., 'saw', 'recognize', 'heard'. The use of the pronoun 'you' rather than 'I' indicates Meridian's assumption that her perception is shared by others, a presumed view of white 'girls' by the black community of which Meridian is a member. The narration illustrates the way in which the white girls are peripheral to Meridian's life, and their actions are only noted periodically. Their 'unknowability' is thus foregrounded through the use of the pronoun 'they', questions, the appearance of words of estrangement (e.g., 'seemed'), and reinforced by the enclosure of "knew" in quotation marks, suggesting that Meridian herself recognises the superficiality of the relationship between them. Meridian never really gets to 'know' white women, not even her friend Lynne, another character whose inner thoughts are revealed in the

course of the narrative. Meridian's viewpoint is framed within that of the third-person narrator, who comments on the limitation of Meridian's perspective to suggest that she is biased in favour of black women and 'appropriates' only their good qualities. The distinction between character and narrator is obvious in this example; the thoughts belong to the character and are juxtaposed with the narrator's comment on her views. Despite her sympathetic treatment in the novel, Meridian's thoughts are presented with a tinge of criticism, and the narration offers guidance on how to respond to her, and the other characters, in contrast to the neutral style of the McCullers' narration. Internal Type B narration therefore offers the possibility of contrasting conflicting world-views between characters, or between the characters and the narrator.

The insight into Meridian's thoughts is in 'free indirect discourse', a special kind of internal narration which is characteristic of Fowler's Internal Type B. Fowler notes that free indirect discourse is a mingling of the A and B modes in a 'dialogic relationship' (Fowler, 1996:174). Thus the narration is similar to Type A but is narrated in the third-person i.e.,

the character's subjective feelings, which are given in Type A narration transformed into third-person, are interwoven with and framed by the author's account of the character's inner state. (Fowler, 1996:174)

In order to illustrate the similarity between Type A, and Type B which includes free indirect discourse, it is possible to perform a transposition test. For example, the sentence 'Who would dream, in her home town, of kissing a white girl?' in the extract above is a representation of Meridian's thoughts transformed into the third-person. When changed into Type A, ('Who would dream, in my home town, of kissing a white girl?'), the representation of Meridian's thoughts remains the same,

but now lacks the narratorial framing of the Type B narration. Free indirect discourse will be discussed further in section 3.8 on speech and thought presentation.

3. 6 (iii) External Types C and D

The external categories, Types C and D, have been discussed briefly above; I noted that External Type C is the type of narration found at the beginning of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, and in the narration of Singer's suicide. In the latter incident, the external perspective emphasises Singer's physical movements at the expense of his thoughts, thereby ensuring that the reader is not alerted to his intended purpose. The extract is reproduced below with the verbs relating to physical activity italicised for emphasis

Singer *left* his luggage in the middle of the station floor. Then he *walked* to the shop. He *greeted* the jeweller for whom he worked with a listless *turn of his hand*. When he *went out* again there was something heavy in his pocket. For a while he *rambled* with bent head along the streets. But the unrefracted brilliance of the sun, the humid heat, oppressed him. He *returned* to his room with swollen eyes and an aching head. After *resting* he *drank* a glass of iced coffee and *smoked* a cigarette. Then when he had *washed* the ash tray and the glass he *brought out* a pistol from his pocket and *put* a bullet in his chest.

(McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.258)

The foregrounding of action at the expense of internal information is evident; Singer's act of shooting himself is included in a list of other physical activities, thus making it appear simultaneously ordinary and horrific, since the only indication of Singer's state of mind is the reference to the fact that the 'heat oppressed him'. In addition, the narration neglects to inform the reader of what the 'something heavy' is that Singer has placed in his pocket, registering only the gun's physical presence. At this point, the narration resembles Fowler's 'External Type D'; the narration 'pretends' that this information is unavailable, although the feeling of weight associated with the gun in Singer's pocket represents a physical sensation, rather than being a strictly external observation. However, by withholding the information about

what the ‘something’ is, the narration ‘pretends’ that this information is unknown. I will consider Type D narration further below.

External Type C is also associated with the epic form and older literatures (Fowler, 1996:177), and can be used for allegories, as in the following example from Schreiner’s short story *In a Far- Off World*.

There is a world in one of the far-off stars, and things do not happen here as they happen there.

In that world were a man and woman; they had one work, and they walked together side by side on many days, and were friends - and that is a thing that happens now and then in this world also.

(Schreiner, *In a Far-Off World*)

The story fails to relate the feelings or thoughts of the characters involved, and merely describes their actions and speech. However, the descriptions of their physical environment does include some evaluative language e.g.,

One night when the moon was shining so that the leaves of all the trees glinted, and the waves of the sea were silvery, the woman walked alone to the forest. It was dark there; the moonlight fell only in little flecks on the dead leaves under her feet, and the branches were knotted tight overhead.

(Shreiner, *In a Far-Off World*, 1891)

The perception of the leaves appears to belong to the character; they are ‘under’ her feet, and the branches are ‘overhead’. The description of the landscape therefore could arguably be filtered through her perception, or be the narrator’s own. It is unusual therefore to find narratives which are consistently Type C, and even then Fowler notes that ‘It is virtually impossible to remove all modal and psychological indicators from a text’ (Fowler, 1996:178). A narrative may alternate between the different types, as was noted with regard to *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* above, in which the predominantly Type B narration changes into External Type C to create the shock effect of Singer’s suicide. By failing to provide information about his intentions, as noted, withholding information about the gun, means that the narration at this point has characteristics of External Type D, emphasising a lack of information.

Fowler argues that this type of narration is an effective means of portraying characters as villains or grotesques; ‘the exaggerated refusal to go below the surface’ (Fowler, 1996:178) creates a sense of distance which, Fowler argues, renders the character unsympathetic. In the case of Singer’s suicide, the narration creates a sense of distance between him and the reader which mirrors the distance between Singer and the other characters; they think he understands them, but they are mistaken. By being denied access to Singer’s thoughts at this point, the reader discovers (like the characters) that he is capable of behaving in a way they had not anticipated.

The features identified by Fowler as characteristic of Type D narration are also present in the following extract. (‘Words of estrangement’ are italicised).

The man was short, with heavy shoulders like beams. He had a small, ragged moustache, and beneath this his lower lip *looked as though* it had been stung by a wasp. There were many things about the fellow that *seemed* contrary. His head was very large and well-shaped, but his neck was soft and slender as a boy’s. The moustache *looked* false, *as if* it had been stuck on for a costume party and would fall off if he talked too fast. It made him *seem* almost middle-aged, although his face with its high, smooth forehead and wide open eyes was young. His hands were huge, stained, and calloused, and he was dressed in a cheap white-linen suit. There was *something* very funny about the man, yet at the same time another feeling would not let you laugh.

(McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.11)

The words of estrangement which Fowler argues indicate Type D narration are present, and the emphasis is on an outside observation of the character, Jake Blount. However, the description of Blount is actually the perception of him by another character, Biff Brannon, the cafe owner, and the one who is observing Blount. The paragraph above is preceded by the following;

It was the morning of 5th May, yes, that Jake Blount had come in. He had noticed him immediately and watched.

(McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.11)

Fowler notes that Type D narration can occur when one character observes another, managed by switches from internal to external narration (Fowler, 1996:180). However, the above extract is in fact internally focalized Type B, and the words of estrangement and modal structures emanate from Brannon's perspective. It is he who is 'interpreting' Blount, not the narrator, as is indicated by the presence of free indirect discourse; the backshifted tense and 'yes' represent Brannon's act of remembering and confirming to himself the date on which he first saw Blount.

The novel also includes information about Jake Blount's mental processes, as illustrated by the following;

If it had not been for Singer, Jake knew that he would have left the town. Only on Sunday, when he was with his friend, did he feel at peace. Sometimes they would go for a walk together or play chess - but more often they spent the day quietly in Singer's room. If he wished to talk Singer was always attentive. If he sat morosely through the day the mute understood his feelings and was not surprised. It seemed to him that only Singer could help him now.
(McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.226)

The insight into the minds of the various characters includes their perceptions of one another, and they analyse and observe the behaviour of the other characters. Thus, just as Brannon observes Blount, Blount observes Brannon, e.g.,

As Brannon reached beneath the counter for the tobacco Jake decided that he was not laughing. In the day-time the fellow's face was not as hard-looking as it was at night.
(McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.47)

Each character observes the faces of the other characters in an attempt to interpret one another's 'personalities', a theme which is epitomised by Singer's close scrutiny of the other characters' lips as they speak. Being deaf, Singer's attention is focused on their faces, giving them the impression that he is listening with interest and understanding. Blount's interpretation of Singer's 'attentiveness' is based on a misunderstanding; as noted above, Singer does not understand any of the other characters. The 'seemed' which represents Blount's perception of Singer's ability to help him illustrates *his* distance from Singer, not the narrator's. Not only does the use of External Type C narration in this novel presents a view the characters from the outside, Internal Type B illustrates the characters' misconceptions about one another, reinforcing the lack of communication that I have argued is a major theme of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. The words of estrangement represent the characters' attempts to 'interpret' one another, and their failure is made evident by the internal perspective which reveals their thoughts.

There is a problem therefore in assuming that the linguistic features which Fowler identifies as typical of external narration *only* indicate externality, since there

are obviously differences between those which relate to a character's internal perspective and those of an external narrator. Although Fowler's categorisation is capable of identifying the shifts in perspective from internal to external to create certain effects, the potential for manipulating information is greater than anticipated by his framework. As noted above, the estranged language which he claims is typical of external narration can also be found in Type B Internal, as characters observe and interpret one another. This is an issue which is discussed by Simpson (1993), whose framework elaborates on Fowler's work and attempts to eliminate the type of problem just described, and which is considered next.

3. 7 Simpson: 'Positive and Negative Shading': Categories A and B

Simpson notes some difficulties in applying Fowler's framework, citing Beckett's *Molloy* as an apparent example of Internal Type A narration which nevertheless exhibits characteristics of External Type D, including words of estrangement which emphasise the narrator's sense of bewilderment and uncertainty (Simpson, 1993:53). This was also noted above in relation to *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, a Type B narrative in which the words of estrangement emanate from within the characters' consciousnesses to emphasise their lack of knowledge about one another.

Simpson notes also examples where Internal Type B narration exhibits generic sentences of the type associated with Internal Type A, and instances where the differences between Internal Type A and External Type C narratives are not great enough to merit different classifications (Simpson, 1993:54). It was noted above that Fowler's framework is based on identification of linguistic features, including modality. Simpson's framework focuses more closely on the four modal systems of English in order to analyse point of view, namely the deontic, boulomaic, epistemic

and perception systems. Concentration on the type of modality which predominates in any given narrative should allow a stricter classification based on linguistic criteria of the way in which point of view operates. I will first outline Simpson's categories with examples before suggesting how far the framework can help to indicate potential responses to the different types of narration.

The deontic system 'is concerned with a speaker's attitude to the degree of obligation attaching to the performance of certain actions' and as such is the modal system of duty. The examples given by Simpson show a 'continuum of commitment' on behalf of the speaker, ranging from permission (You may leave), through obligation, (You should leave), to requirement (You must leave) (Simpson, 1993:47).

The boulomaic system is concerned with expressions of desire, conveyed through modal lexical verbs such as 'I hope that you will leave', 'I wish you'd leave' etc. (Simpson, 1993:48). The deontic and boulomaic systems are therefore closely related, except that the examples above exhibit differences in directness terms. Telling someone to leave explicitly is more direct and more impolite than merely implying that you wish them to leave. The choice between emphasising the duty of the hearer, or referring to the needs of the speaker, are alternative methods of attempting to achieve similar effects.

The epistemic system is 'concerned with the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of a proposition expressed' (Simpson, 1993:48), and Simpson argues that this system is the most important in the analysis of point of view. Simpson takes the example of the categorical assertion, 'You are right', to show how it is possible for speakers to 'convey varying degrees of epistemic commitment to the basic proposition', ranging from modal auxiliaries, 'You could be right', 'You must

be right', to modal lexical verbs, 'I think you are right', 'I believe you are right', to modal adverbs, 'arguably', 'possibly', 'certainly' and so on. (Simpson, 1993:48/9).

The perception system, Simpson argues, may be regarded as a subsystem of the epistemic system; the

degree of commitment to the truth of a proposition is predicated on some reference to human perception, normally visual perception.

(Simpson, 1993:50)

for example, 'It's clear that you are right', and 'It's obvious that you are right'.

Simpson's framework is based on these four modal systems, and since the 'modal systems are distributed unevenly across the point of view categories' and 'certain modalities are specific to, or at least dominant in, particular categories.' (Simpson, 1993:51), concentration on the type of modality which predominates in a narrative should offer a method of analysing point of view which is more capable of dealing with subtle variations in narrative presentation based on linguistic features.

3. 7 (i) Category A Narratives

Initially, Simpson makes a distinction between Category A narratives, consisting of narration in the first-person by a participating character, and Category B narratives which are narrated in the third-person by an invisible non-participating narrator (Simpson, 1993:55). Category A narratives may be further distinguished according to whether they display 'positive', 'negative' or 'neutral' modality or 'shading'. Category A narratives with positive shading (A + ve), display *verba sentiendi*, and evaluative adjectives which foreground the opinions, beliefs and desires of the narrator, and so far conform to Fowler's Internal Type A. Such an example is found in *Sexing the Cherry*, as the female narrator describes her feelings about the places and people around her.

London is a foul place, full of pestilence and rot. I would like to take Jordan

to live in the country but we must be near Hyde Park so that I can enter my dogs in the races and fighting.

(Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*, p.13)

Both the deontic and boulomaic systems are foregrounded, emphasising the narrator's obligations ('we must be near Hyde Park') and her desire ('I would like to take Jordan to live in the country'), based on her evaluation of London as a 'foul place'. The foregrounding of deontic and boulomaic modality in this type of narration can result in a tendency for readers to collapse the levels of implied author and narrator, leading to an assumption that the views of both are identical, as was noted with regard to *The Handmaid's Tale*, and which Simpson notes with regard to *Jane Eyre* (Simpson, 1993:57). However, the distancing effect of the narrator's unusual world-view in *Sexing the Cherry*, combined with the fact that the novel is set in the seventeenth century, means that this is unlikely in this example. In A + ve narratives therefore the reader is left in no doubt that the narrator is clear about her or his own views.

Category A narratives with negative shading (A - ve), by contrast, 'exhibit precisely the sort of epistemic and perception modalities which are absent from A + ve' (Simpson, 1993:58) serving to illustrate the narrator's uncertainty or bewilderment. Simpson notes that transitions into A - ve may function to suggest self-questioning in homodiegetic narratives, and may 'result in a disorientating lack of purchase on events narrated, with things no longer as tangible and palpable as they were' (Simpson, 1993:58). This feature is apparent in the retrospective narrative of Daisy Stone in *The Stone Diaries* discussed above, as Daisy remembers her childhood experience of being ill; 'I must have slept a good deal'. The transition into A - ve therefore indicates the narrator's lack of knowledge and uncertainty about events, as a result of the passage of time. The following example from *The Handmaid's Tale*

illustrates this mode; Offred's modality throughout the novel fluctuates between A + ve and A -ve modes, illustrating the fact that she is certain about her own needs and desires, but is uncertain about the motives of others. In this extract, she is summoned to the Commander's room, and struggles to comprehend the nature of a garment that he holds out to her and asks her to wear. (Words of estrangement have been italicised).

He brings his hand out from behind his back. He's holding a handful, *it seems*, of feathers, mauve and pink. Now he shakes this out. It's a garment, *apparently*, and for a woman: there are the cups for the breasts, covered in purple sequins. The sequins are tiny stars. The feathers are around the thigh holes, and along the top. So I wasn't that wrong about the girdle after all. *I wonder* where he found it. All such clothing was supposed to have been destroyed. (Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.243)

The emphasis is on the narrator's attempt to make sense of an unfamiliar situation, as indicated by the presence of modal lexical verbs ('I wonder'), adverbs of perception ('apparently'), and 'words of estrangement', ('it seems'). Simpson notes that the effect of epistemic and perception markers becomes more significant according to their position in the sentence (Simpson, 1993:60). This is also referred to by Leech and Short as 'psychological sequencing' (Leech and Short, 1981:177) or by Short as 'event - coding' (Short, 1996:287); the reader is given the impression of being provided with information as Offred receives it. Her perception moves from an impression of feathers, to the realisation that the Commander is holding out a garment, that it is a garment for a woman, that it has purple sequins, that these are in the form of stars, that the feathers are around the thigh holes. The manipulation of information suggests simultaneity, as if the reader is perceiving events at the same time as Offred, her eyes focusing on different aspects as they are revealed to her and subsequently arriving at a complete picture of the garment ('I wasn't that wrong about the girdle after all'). The modal operators (e.g., 'apparently') are post-posed, and, together with

the present tense of the narration, serve to reinforce the impression of the narrator attempting to understand what is happening *as* it happens.

In Category A narratives with neutral shading, there is an absence of narratorial modality and the narrative proceeds through categorical assertions (Simpson, 1993:60). Fowler also refers to this kind of neutrality, but his discussion relates to narratives in the third-person, i.e., Type C External, and was considered above in relation to examples from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. However, Simpson suggests that this type of neutrality can be extended to include instances of first-person narration. To illustrate this I will again use an example from *The Handmaid's Tale*, a narrative which exhibits characteristics of all three types of Category A, serving as a reflection of the homodiegetic narrator's state of mind at different stages. Transitions into A neutral produce an impression of resignation and tedium as Offred concentrates on her immediate environment, and indicate a temporary retreat from the narrator's thoughts and worries to concentrate on the mundane and tedious aspects of surviving the present.

I get up out of the chair, advance my feet into the sunlight, in their red shoes, flat-heeled to save the spine and not for dancing. The red gloves are lying on the bed. I pick them up, pull them onto my hands, finger by finger.
(Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.18)

Here it is useful to reiterate Genette's comment that focalization can vary during the course of a narrative, and that examples of each type may be very short (Genette, 1980:191). Similarly, narrative categorisation can change, moving between the different types of modality depending on what is being described. Narrators may be certain about some things but not about others, may change their minds, be proved wrong, and so on. The same is sometimes true of third-person narrators, and I will now consider Simpson's Category B narratives.

3. 7 (ii) Category B Narratives

Category B narratives can take two forms, depending on whether the narration provides access to the mind(s) of the character(s), termed 'B in Reflector Mode' or 'B (R)', or whether the narration is outside of the consciousness(es) of any of the character(s), termed 'B in Narratorial Mode' or 'B(N)' (Simpson, 1993:62). Like Category A, Category B narratives can be distinguished according to the type of modality or shading which is exhibited, either positive, negative or neutral.

B (N) + ve is therefore similar to A + ve, displaying foregrounded deontic and boulomaic narratorial modality, except that the narration is now provided by a non-participating third-person narrator, and is similar in this respect to Fowler's Internal Type B. Such an example is found in Bronte's *Shirley*, in which the narrator's opinion of people and events is foregrounded, and is reflected in the modality and generic sentences.

Of late years an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the north of England: they lie very thick on the hills; every parish has one or more of them; they are young enough to be very active, and ought to be doing a great deal of good. (Bronte, *Shirley*, p.1)

The narrator's opinion of the curates is reflected in the evaluative language; their 'abundance' is compared with the goodness of rain on the hills (i.e., 'shower'); however, the description is made ironic due to the contrast between their youth and potential activity, and the connotations of 'lie thick', suggesting inactivity and lack of intelligence. Similarly, the modal auxiliary 'ought' undermines their potential usefulness, due to its ambiguity; it refers to their duty to 'do good', but implies a sense of doubt on the narrator's part.

Like Category A narratives, Category B narratives may also reflect a narrator's uncertainty and confusion, termed Category B (N) with negative shading or B (N) - ve. In this category the narration may also include 'words of estrangement'; however

this time they are the product of the third-person narrator, and may indicate a lack of information concerning the characters and their mental processes. The epistemic and perception modal systems are highlighted to produce an impression of ‘alienation’ and ‘bewilderment’ (Simpson, 1993:65). An example of B (N) - ve is found in the following extract from Marshall’s *Brown Girl, Brownstones*. The novel opens in B (N) + ve, foregrounding the modality of the external narrator as she or he describes the opening scene, and then moves into B (N) - ve, emphasising the narrator’s perception of the characters, including that of a young girl, Selina, from the outside. The effect is to suggest that the narrator’s opinion and evaluation of what is under observation is based on outward appearances. In the following example, the external emphasis implies an inability to see beneath the surface into the mind of the character. (Again, words of estrangement are italicised for emphasis)

She sat this summer afternoon on the upper landing on the top floor, listening to its shallow breathing - a ten-year-old girl with scuffed legs and a body as straggly as the clothes she wore. A haze of sunlight seeping down from the skylight through the dust and dimness of the hall caught her wide full mouth, the small but strong nose, the eyes set deep in the darkness of her face. They were not the eyes of a child. *Something* too old lurked in their centers. They were weighted, *it seemed*, with scenes of a long life. She *might have been* old once and now, miraculously, young again - but with the memory of that other life intact. She *seemed* to know the world down there in the dark hall and beyond for what it was. (Marshall, *Brown girl, Brownstones*, p. 4)

The narration at this point is in B(N) - ve mode, emphasising an apparent lack of knowledge about the girl, Selina, and displaying words of estrangement (‘Something’, ‘it seemed’, ‘she might’, ‘she seemed’). Like Fowler’s External Type D narratives, the emphasis is initially on Selina’s outward appearance, illuminated by the sunlight which shines down onto her, (‘scuffed legs’, ‘straggly’ clothes and body, ‘wide full mouth’, ‘small but strong nose’), but moves gradually into Selina’s consciousness i.e., into B (R) mode, to be discussed below. The narration at the

beginning of the novel ‘pretends’ that Selina is an unknown entity, but the move into B (R) + ve mode suggests that the information is withheld, not absent.

B (N) Neutral is used to describe the most impersonal type of narration, (Fowler’s External Type C) and is typified by an absence of narratorial modality, direct description, or analysis of the thoughts or feelings of the characters, differing from A neutral only due to the fact that the narration is in the third rather than the first-person (Simpson, 1993:67). Examples of this type have already been discussed above in relation to Fowler’s Type C.

Category B narratives in Reflector mode describe those narratives which include information about the character’s thoughts and feelings, and relate to Fowler’s Internal Type B. Again, B (R) narratives can similarly can display positive, negative and neutral shading, but are this time narrated in the third person through the consciousness of a Reflector, i.e.,

the character (or even animal or inanimate object) whose psychological perspective is represented in a text (Simpson, 1993:62)

sometimes referred to as the ‘centre of consciousness’. In B (R) + ve mode the evaluative language, deontic and boulomaic expressions belong to the Reflector rather than to the third-person narrator. B (R) + ve mode is exemplified by the extract from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, discussed above, and reproduced below, describing Blount’s perception of Singer.

If it had not been for Singer, Jake knew that he would have left the town. Only on Sunday, when he was with his friend, did he feel at peace. Sometimes they would go for a walk together or play chess - but more often they spent the day quietly in Singer’s room. If he wished to talk Singer was always attentive. If he sat morosely through the day the mute understood his feelings and was not surprised. It seemed to him that only Singer could help him now.
(McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.226)

The epistemic and boulomaic modal expressions ‘knew’ and ‘wished’ belong to Jake, as do the *verba sentiendi* (‘feel’) and words of estrangement (‘seemed’). As a result, as noted above, the external narration which frames Jake’s (inaccurate) perceptions illustrates his faulty interpretation of Singer; the ‘understanding’ with which Singer is attributed by Jake is negated elsewhere by the insight into Singer’s mind. Since Singer is also a Reflector, the reader is aware of his incomprehension of the other characters, and that Jake’s certainty about Singer is misplaced. The phrase, ‘It seemed to him that only Singer could help him now’ underlines the fact that this is Jake’s perception of Singer’s ability to help him, not that of a third-person narrator.

In B (R) -ve narratives the bewilderment and confusion indicated by words of estrangement and modality is the product of the Reflector, rather than the narrator, and corresponds to Fowler’s External Type D. This category is exemplified by the extract from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* discussed above in section 3.5.(iii) in which the perception of Jake Blount by Biff Brannon emphasises the latter’s perception of Blount in accordance with his external appearances. References to Blount’s visual perception e.g. ‘His lower lip looked as though it had been stung by a wasp’, ‘the moustache looked false’, are reinforced by uncertain modality. Biff lacks information about Blount and attempts to interpret his personality with reference to his external appearance.

Simpson’s final category, B (R) Neutral, is similar to B(N) Neutral, with the exception that the categorical assertions are now mediated through the consciousness of a Reflector. Sustained passages of this type of narration are unusual, since the point of the B (R) mode is to produce an impression of the character’s mind. Pym’s *Quartet in Autumn* is a B (R) narrative which provides insights into the minds of the four major characters, and also provides information about the way they are perceived

by the other characters, including minor characters who are peripheral to the story. In this way, the reader is provided with a combination of perspectives which provide a fuller picture, as in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* described above. In the following extract, the narration is filtered through the perspective of one of the four main Reflectors, Letty, whose characterisation was discussed in Chapter Two.

In her comfortable bed-sitting room, which had a wash-basin behind a screen and a small electric cooker, she prepared a meal of rice with the remains of a chicken, then settled herself to listen to the wireless and continue working on a tapestry chair seat she was making.

The house belonged to an elderly woman who took in, as the most refined type of lodgers, two others like herself and a Hungarian refugee, who had more or less adapted herself to the ways of the house - one's radio turned down and the bathroom left as one would wish to find it. It was a comfortable enough life, if a little sterile, perhaps even deprived.

(Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.24)

There is little indication that the narration is from Letty's perspective, and it appears to conform to B (N) neutral; the only evaluative language is in the description of the room as 'comfortable' and the cooker as 'small' (although arguably the latter is a physical, rather than an evaluative, description). However, the repetition of the house rules appears to be Letty's remembrance of her landlady's words, and the comments on the other lodgers (including the 'Hungarian refugee') also belong to Letty; she is uncomfortable with 'foreigners', an impression of her 'personality' which builds up during the course of the narrative. In addition, it becomes apparent that the evaluation of her life as 'deprived' is Letty's perception; the move from the adjective 'comfortable' to the modal adverb 'perhaps' indicates that Letty is musing on the conditions of her existence. This becomes apparent in the extract immediately following the above, as the narration moves further into Letty's consciousness and she ponders on what it means to be 'deprived'.

But deprivation implied once having had something to be deprived of, like

Marcia's breast, to give a practical example, and Letty had never really had anything much. Yet, she sometimes wondered, might not the experience of 'not having' be regarded as something with its own validity?
(Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.34)

Categorisation of the extract as B (R) mode thus occurs retrospectively, as it becomes evident that the apparent neutrality of the description of Letty's circumstances is not neutral but emanates from Letty's perspective.

Simpson's framework thus distinguishes nine separate ways in which narratives can be categorised, three for Category A first-person, and six for Category B third-person. Categories A and B (R) are those which provide most information concerning the mental processes of the character(s) and or narrator, and include the special category free indirect discourse, which, Fowler suggests, constitutes a dialogic relationship between the two modes.

I have argued that having access to the thoughts of the characters is a prerequisite for understanding, and has consequences for readers' evaluations of the characters and causal attributions. I will now consider the different ways in which characters' speech and thought may be presented and the potential effect on readers' responses.

3. 8 Speech and Thought Presentation

The discussion so far has considered the way in which a narrative may be presented from an internal or an external point of view. Internal point of view allows the reader to be positioned in varying degrees of closeness to the narrator and/or character, depending upon whether the narration is in the first or third-person. External point of view positions the reader in varying degrees of distance from the narrator and/or the characters. Simpson's Category A and B (R) narratives are the closest to the character's point of view, the difference between them being the identity of the narrator, i.e., either homodiegetic or heterodiegetic. B (N) - ve is the furthest

away from the character's point of view, utilising a heterodiegetic narrator who emphasises that distance with words of estrangement and uncommitted modality. I will now consider the way in which these differences in proximity are translated into a representation of a) the characters' speech and b) their thought processes. Simpson's categories will be retained throughout the discussion to refer to the different narrative types. I will first consider the different ways in which speech can be presented, before moving on to a discussion of thought presentation.

3. 8 (i) Speech Presentation

In Chapter Two, I considered the way in which we evaluate the 'personalities' of fictional characters just as we evaluate those of people in real life. My discussion of the characterisation of Letty and Marcia, the women characters in *Quartet in Autumn*, also alluded to the fact that we have certain expectations concerning the way in which people will behave, depending upon our assessment of their age, status, occupation and social role, for example, thus activating a person schema. Connected with this aspect of characterisation is the representation of speech, which can convey additional information about the type of 'person' the character is expected to evoke, as will be discussed in section 3. 8. (i) next. The preceding discussion in this chapter has also considered the way in which the degree of access into the characters' minds and the type of narration employed provides differing degrees of information, which may or may not have the potential to elicit understanding in the implied reader. Being made privy to the characters' thoughts should allow us to understand the motivation behind their behaviour, for example. In section 3. 8 (ii) therefore I will consider the different ways in which the characters' thoughts can be represented. First, however, I will detail the different types of speech presentation at the author's disposal.

Representation of a character's speech can thus be an additional aid to characterisation allowing the reader's evaluation of the character's 'personality' to be confirmed, depending on the degree of narrative 'interference' between the character's words and the implied reader. My discussion of the categories of speech and thought presentation draws primarily from the work of Leech and Short (1981), and its development by Short (1996), since the 'cline' of speech and thought presentation which Leech and Short propose, offers a clear and systematic method of distinguishing between the modes, and the different effects of each. During the course of the discussion, I will also refer to other works which offer insights into the effects of the different modes, including Page (1973), Pascal (1977), Fowler, (1996) and Toolan, (1998).

The easiest form of speech presentation to identify is direct speech. As Page notes, the advantage of direct speech (henceforth 'DS') is its ability to allow a character to

'speak', in an individual voice, directly to the reader without the appearance of authorial intervention. Its advantages are its immediacy and the stylistic variety attainable in dialogue which can offer lexical and syntactical contrasts to the other portions of a novel [...] (Page, 1973:30)

Above I argued that the narration in *The Handmaid's Tale* is rendered somewhat unreliable due to the subjectivity of the narration. However, at some stages of the narrative, Offred reports conversations between herself and other characters in DS. The sense of immediacy described by Page can be seen in the following example, in which Offred reports a conversation with Ofglen, another Handmaid, who tells Offred of a secret password.

Ofglen says, "I hear that's where the Eyes hold their banquets."
 "Who told you?" I say. There's no one near, we can speak more clearly, but out of habit we keep our voices low.
 "The grapevine," she says. "There's a password," she says.
 "A password?" I ask. "What for?"

“So you can tell,” she says. “Who is and who isn’t.”
 Although I can’t see what use it is for me to know, I ask, “What is it then?”
 “Mayday,” she says. “I tried it on you once.”
 “Mayday,” I repeat. I remember that day. *M’aidez*.
 “Don’t use it unless you have to,” says Ofglen. It isn’t good for us to know too
 many of the others, in the network. In case you get caught.”
 (Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, p.212)

As Page notes, the effect of this can be seen more clearly when it is contrasted with other speech forms, as will be considered below. DS purports to be an accurate representation of the words spoken, as illustrated by their enclosure within quotation marks. The ‘reported clauses’ are followed or introduced by ‘reporting clauses’ (e.g., ‘I say’, ‘she says’, ‘I ask’, ‘says Ofglen’, ‘Ofglen says’). The narrator’s presence is thus emphasised, due to the repetition of ‘she says’, ‘I say’, ‘I ask’, ‘I repeat’. In normal speech, the extent to which words are quoted accurately may be debated, since we often ‘report’ conversations in which we have been involved, or have witnessed, as if we are quoting the actual words used, when often we are presenting the gist of what was said in dramatic form. In fiction however, as in the example above, DS can give the impression that we are witnessing the conversation between Offred and Ofglen as it takes place. The present tense in this example (‘says’, not ‘said’), reinforces the sense of immediacy. The narration must be retrospective despite the present tense, but the fact that these words are remembered so clearly by Offred illustrates their importance; Offred has to remember the password and the importance of using it with discretion. The use of DS therefore suggests that this conversation remains vivid in her memory, serving to accentuate the danger to which the Handmaids expose themselves in conversation.

The significance of the conversation is further emphasised when Offred subsequently reports another conversation, this time with Ofglen’s replacement, ‘Ofglen’. Offred has no information about what has happened to the previous Ofglen,

and attempts to discover whether the new 'Ofglen' is to be trusted, by referring to her predecessor and making use of the password.

"I've only known her since May," I say. I can feel my skin growing hot, my heart speeding up. This is tricky. For one thing, it's a lie. And how do I get from there to the next vital word? "Around the first of May I think it was. What they used to call May Day."

"Did they?" she says, light, indifferent, menacing. "That isn't a term I remember. I'm surprised you do. You ought to make an effort..." She pauses. "To clear your mind of such ..." She pauses again. "Echoes."

Now I feel cold, seeping over my skin like water. What she is doing is warning me.

She isn't one of us. But she knows.

(Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.296)

DS in this instance has the effect of emphasising the importance of the conversation being reported by the first-person narrator, in addition to having the ability to reinforce the impression of the characters' personalities, by reproducing the 'flavour' of their speech. This is apparent in the extract above, in which the dramatic pauses in the new Ofglen's speech are included in Offred's report, and help to provide an impression of her speaking voice, reinforcing the 'menace' of her words as perceived by the narrator. In these examples, the conversations are reported by the first-person narrator, and observations concerning the characters' speech are filtered through her perception. DS in third-person narration differs slightly, in that additional information, such as that carried by reporting clauses, is obtained via the third-person narrator, and Page compares this to the role of stage directions in dramatic texts (1973:26/27). Fowler goes further, to suggest that such reporting clauses carry additional information; they are

more than 'stage directions' giving indications of the speech acts and behaviour of the speakers; cumulatively, they add an emotional colouring deriving from the narrator's analysis of the relationship between the characters. (Fowler, 1996:152)

In order to examine this in more detail, I will consider an example from the Category B narrative, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. The impression of the characters' personalities which is produced via B (R) + ve mode in this novel is reinforced by reports of the conversations between them and which are again recorded in DS. As noted above, the insight into the thoughts of the characters allows the reader to compare their perception of one another with their 'real' personalities, thereby producing both an internal and external perspective. The observation of Jake Blount, the drunk, by Biff Brannon, the cafe owner, described above, gives an impression of Blount's outward appearance, and is complemented by the outward observation of Brannon by Blount. In the following extract, the conversational interaction between the two illustrates the relationship between them.

'Man, you ought to know better,' Biff said finally. 'You can't go around like this. Why, I'm surprised you haven't been picked up for vagrancy. You ought to sober up. You need washing and your hair needs cutting. Mothergod! You're not fit to walk around amongst people.'

Blount scowled and bit his lower lip.

'Now, don't take offence and get your dander up. Do what I tell you. Go back in the kitchen and tell the coloured boy to give you a big pan of hot water. Tell Willie to give you a towel and plenty of soap and wash yourself good. Then eat you some milk toast and open up your suitcase and put you on a clean shirt and a pair of breeches that fit you. Then tomorrow you can start doing whatever you're going to do and working wherever you mean to work and get straightened out.'

'You know what you can do,' Blount said drunkenly. 'You can just -'

'All right,' Biff said very quietly. 'No I can't. Now you just behave yourself.'

McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, p.15)

In this example, the reporting clauses are in the past tense ('Biff said', 'Blount said') although use of the present tense would not make the extract incongruous, and would produce a similar effect to that of the previous example, i.e., an impression that the reader is witnessing the conversation as it takes place. The representation of Biff's speech illustrates his personality; he scolds Blount as if he is a naughty child and Biff

his parent. Biff's speech is indicative of his 'maternal' role towards the other characters (it *is* maternal, not paternal; the insight into his mind emphasises his 'feminine side') and he observes them and looks out for their interests. By the end of the novel he has written off Blount's debt to himself and given him money to help him on his way. Biff is the character to whom the other characters should turn for understanding, rather than to Singer, and this is reflected in his conversations with them. Just as Offred's report of Ofglen's speech includes the first-person narrator's evaluation of that speech (e.g. 'light, indifferent, menacing'), so the third-person narration includes information about the way in which the words are spoken (e.g. 'drunkenly', 'very quietly'). In both cases, the narrator provides guidance on how to interpret the behaviour of the characters; the difference between the two is due to different narrative modes. In the example from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, the perception of the manner in which the words are spoken stems from the third-person narrator. The 'flavour' of Biff's speaking voice is also captured; the use of exclamations ('mothergod!'), slang expressions ('get your dander up') and unusual phrasing ('eat you some', 'put you on') produce a direct impression of Brannon's speaking voice. The narrative information carried by the reporting clauses therefore differs between Category A and B narrators, since the manner of speech is filtered through the perception of the character/narrator in first-person narratives.

Simpson notes that DS 'may be regarded as a base-line reference point for the other modes' (Simpson, 1993:22). However, conversations are not always reported in DS; often the narrator mediates between the character and the reader to provide a report of the conversation without recording the actual words. This is termed 'indirect speech' (henceforth IS) and is a representation of the propositional content of what was said, rather than a verbatim account. Whereas DS foregrounds the words used, IS

has a ‘backgrounding’ effect (Short, 1996:293), and the words are now the property of the narrator, rather than the character. In the simplest example, DS can be transformed into IS by removing quotation marks, as in the following example;

Direct speech	“Time to go home’, said my mother. (Winterson, <i>Oranges are not the only fruit</i> , p.13)
Indirect speech	My mother said that it was time to go home

In addition, the alteration necessitates the insertion of the word ‘that’, i.e., ‘My mother said that’. The difference becomes more apparent if we add the present tense, for example;

Direct Speech	“It is time to go home,” said my mother
Indirect Speech	My mother said that it was time to go home.

In the first example, the present tense is consistent with the character’s present; in the second, the tense is backshifted in order to be consistent with the past tense of the narration. The effect of this can be seen if the example from *The Handmaid’s Tale* above is transformed into IS, e.g.,

Direct speech	Ofglen says, “I hear that’s where the Eyes hold their banquets.”
Indirect speech	Ofglen said that she had heard that that was where the Eyes held their banquets.

The distancing effect of IS becomes apparent; the reader no longer appears to be witnessing the conversation as it is taking place, due to the narrator’s intervention. The reported speech is now ‘more tightly under narratorial control’ (Simpson, 1993:22), and lacks the immediacy of the original. In addition, the change in tense from ‘is’ (that’s) to ‘was’, and ‘hold’ to ‘held’, makes the phrase ‘that was where the Eyes held their banquets’ ambiguous and less menacing, since it could imply that the banquets no longer take place.

Simpson notes that both DS and IS can be rendered more ‘free’; the category ‘free direct speech’ refers to that form in which both reporting clauses and quotation

marks are omitted (Simpson, 1993:22). Similarly, Short suggests that DS without quotation marks or reporting clauses can produce the effect that 'we are witnessing what the character says with no interference at all from the narrator'. (Short, 1996:306). For example, Offred's perception of Ofglen's speech as 'menacing' in the example above, illustrates her interpretive role as narrator. By contrast, Offred's reports of her conversations with the other women in the household, in particular the Commander's wife, include the reporting clauses but omit quotation marks. In the former example, the impression of the speech is rendered vivid and mutual, a conversation between two people of equal status, as illustrated by the inclusive pronouns 'we', 'our' and 'us' (e.g. 'we can speak more clearly', 'we keep our voices low', 'it isn't good for us'). The following example, which takes place between Offred and the Commander's wife shortly after Offred's arrival, illustrates Offred's inferior status, and relegates her to the role of 'respondent'.

I want to see as little of you as possible, she said. I expect you feel the same way about me.

I didn't answer, as a yes would have been insulting, a no contradictory.

I know you aren't stupid, she went on. She inhaled, blew out the smoke. I've read your file. As far as I'm concerned, this is like a business transaction. But if I get trouble, I'll give trouble back. You understand? Yes, Ma'am, I said.

Don't call me Ma'am, she said irritably. You're not a Martha.
(Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, p.25)

The lack of quotation marks appears to reinforce a sense of resignation and waiting on Offred's part. Unlike the rapid interaction between Offred and Ofglen in the first example, accentuated by the repetition of 'she says', 'I say', or the 'menace' associated with the latter example, her conversation with the Commander's wife is less fluid, due to their unequal conversational roles. Due to her subordinate position within the household, Offred cannot initiate topics, but can only observe the

Commander's wife and respond appropriately when required. This form of speech presentation is termed Free Direct Speech (FDS); whereas the evidence of the narrator's presence in DS is emphasised through the use of reporting clauses and quotation marks, the removal of either produces a 'freer form' (Leech and Short, 1981:322). The effect of reporting speech without quotation marks in this instance is to make speech and action appear to be on the same level. The act of smoking during the conversation by the Commander's wife is given almost as much prominence as her words, and emphasises Offred's role as observer. Like the pauses reported in Ofglen's speech in the previous conversation, the speech of the Commander's wife is punctuated by pauses as she inhales and exhales cigarette smoke, actions which are uninterrupted and uninteruptable by Offred. The speech presentation in this example thus serves to illustrate Offred's sense of resignation, lacking the immediacy of the previous examples.

The effect of removing reporting clauses and quotation marks can serve to remove the indication of the narrator's presence, as illustrated by the following example from Morrison's *Beloved*. The conversation below takes place between a mother, Sethe, and her daughter, Beloved, who is a ghost. The absence of reporting clauses and quotation marks means that the reader must rely on contextual knowledge and recognition of the characters' speech patterns in order to identify who is speaking.

Tell me the truth. Didn't you come from the other side?
 Yes. I was on the other side.
 You came back because of me?
 Yes.
 You rememory me?
 Yes. I remember you.
 (Morrison, *Beloved*, p.215)

Awareness of which character is speaking arises as a result of a) the question and answer format (Sethe asks questions and Beloved responds), b) the reference to

‘the other side’ and c) the idiosyncratic use of ‘rememory’ instead of ‘remember’ which is a characteristic of Sethe’s speech. The ‘freedom’ which this form allows produces an impression that the characters are speaking independently without narratorial intervention, an aspect which can, however, lead to confusion. In the following extract, the conversation now includes an additional voice, that of Sethe’s other daughter, and Beloved’s sister, Denver.

Beloved
 You are my sister
 You are my daughter
 You are my face; you are me
 I have found you again; you have come back to me
 You are my Beloved
 You are mine
 You are mine
 You are mine
 (Morrison, *Beloved*, p.216)

Only the line ‘you are my daughter’ can be attributed unequivocally to Sethe; she is speaking to Beloved, although the same phrase could obviously be addressed to Denver. The remaining utterances could belong to any of the women, and the ambiguity is presumably intentional. The voices merge to symbolise the reunion of mother, daughter, and sisters, an effect which is reinforced by the lack of narratorial interference, including the omission of full stops at the ends of lines. The fluidity of the women’s speech is further suggested in the repetition of ‘you are mine’, which serves to symbolise the fact that the characters are together again and now ‘one’.

‘Free Indirect Speech’ is a more complex form of speech presentation; as noted above, Fowler argues that it constitutes a mingling of Internal Types A and B to form a ‘dialogic’ relationship between them (Fowler, 1996:174). An extensive discussion of Free Indirect Speech (hereafter FIS) is found in Pascal’s *The Dual Voice* (1977). As Pascal notes, the emergence of FIS can be seen as a natural development of the change of emphasis from plot, to the preoccupation with ‘states of

minds, temperamental moods, rather than external actions' (1977:34). However, Pascal uses the term FIS to refer to both speech and thought, thought being seen as a kind of internal speech. Leech and Short (1981) note however that although the speech and thought categories are similar formally, they have different effects, as I will discuss further below. Pascal also notes that the term 'indirect' is somewhat misleading, since FIS retains some of the features of DS, and preserves some of the elements of the 'characteristic personal idiom of the speaker, although it uses the pronouns and tenses of simple indirect speech' (1977:8). FIS thus has some of the features of DS and of IS, and constitutes a 'fusion of narratorial and character voices' (Simpson, 1993:23). As Pascal describes it, the narrator is positioned 'directly into the experiential field of the character, and adopts the latter's perspective in regard to time and place' (1977:9).

The following example from *Wide Sargasso Sea* can serve to illustrate this further. Antoinette, the first-person narrator, describes an incident in her childhood in which she arrives home dirty and dishevelled, only to find that her mother is entertaining guests, at which point she hides in her room until they leave.

I came out of my room and my mother was sitting on the blue sofa. She looked at me for some time before she said that I had behaved very oddly. My dress was even dirtier than usual.

(Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p.6)

The phrase 'she said that I had behaved very oddly' is IS, the narrator's report of her mother's words, and is followed by FIS; 'My dress was even dirtier than usual'. To elaborate, in DS the words would be 'Your dress is even dirtier than usual', with the possessive pronoun 'your' referring to the narrator, and the present tense reflecting the characters' present tense. In the FIS version, the possessive pronoun 'my' belongs to the narrator, as does the past tense, but the words appear to be those spoken by her mother. The reporting clause (e.g. My mother said that') is omitted, and

the sentence is thus a blending of the two perspectives. One of the characteristics of FIS is its ambiguity; taken out of context, the sentence ‘My dress was even dirtier than usual,’ could be seen to be the narrator’s perception of her appearance. As Simpson notes, it is the ‘indeterminacy’ of FIS when devoid of the context which gives it its ‘special status’ (Simpson, 1993:23). However, coming as it does after the narrator’s report of her mother’s words in IS, it is obviously a representation of what her mother said, her mother’s comment on her appearance. This is confirmed by the report of the narrator’s reply in DS immediately following, ‘It’s Tia’s dress’. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p.6)

At this point it is useful to refer to Short’s notion of a continuum or cline of speech and thought presentation (Short, 1996:288-310), since this usefully categorises each of the different types of speech according to their degree of proximity to either the character or to the narrator. A similar cline can be applied to categories of thought presentation, as will be considered below. Toolan also suggests that these differences can be represented spatially, and I will refer to his discussion at relevant points during my consideration of Short’s categories. The speech categories discussed so far can be presented diagrammatically according to their proximity to the character’s point of view as follows;

IS FIS DS Character

(Speech continuum adapted from Leech and Short, 1981:344)

As noted, DS is closest to the character end of the scale, capable of representing the actual words spoken, producing a sense of immediacy and closeness to the character. IS is further away from the character than FIS, due to the narrator’s

intervention in the former, and the mingling of character and narrator voices in the latter. These three categories are those in which some aspect of the character's speech is recorded, moving from a direct and faithful representation of the actual words, becoming progressively more under the control of the narrator through FIS to IS.

Representation of speech can be brought even more strictly under the control of the narrator and distant from the character and relates to those instances where the narrator reports that speech (or thought) has occurred, but reports it in the narrator's own words all of which become progressively more under the narrator's control. Leech and Short's remaining categories, namely, 'Narrator's Report of a Speech Act', a 'Narrator's Report of Speech' will now be considered in turn.

A 'Narrator's Report of a Speech Act' (hereafter NRSA) refers to those instances of speech presentation in which the narrator provides a report that a speech act has taken place, but provides a minimum amount of information about what was said, recording only the type of utterance that occurred, as in the following example from *Wide Sargasso Sea*;

She often questioned me about England, and listened attentively to my answers, but I was certain that nothing I said made much difference.
(Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p.47)

Wide Sargasso Sea is a Category A narrative which has two narrators, Rochester, and his wife Antoinette, (the madwoman confined to the attic in *Jane Eyre*). Antoinette narrates the first and third sections of the novel and Rochester the middle. In this example, Rochester, is describing his Creole wife's fascination with England, based, in his opinion on a misconception, an impression which she has gleaned from romantic novels, pictures, and so on. Only the type of speech acts are reported, questions and answers, and the topic, England. By summarising rather than reporting the speech, the narration emphasises the fact that these conversations take

place frequently, too frequently to narrate each incidence separately, ('she often questioned me'). The fact that Rochester is unable to change Antoinette's opinion of England, despite the frequency of these exchanges, emphasises the extent of the misunderstanding between them, a result of their cultural differences, and their inability to come to a mutual understanding.

In his subsequent development of the speech continuum, Short proposes an even more minimal category, namely a 'Narrator's Representation of Speech' (or NRS) (1996:28-311), which reports only that speech took place, but not the type of speech act. Such uninformativeness may simply be a result of the narrator's or character's inability to hear what is taking place, and may add to a sense of confusion or uncertainty. In the case of Rochester in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, it has the additional effect of reinforcing the sense of his alienation in a strange country, as in the following example;

I listened. Christophine was talking softly. My wife was crying. Then a door shut. They had gone into the bedroom.
(Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p.81)

The extract preceding this describes a row between Rochester and Antoinette, and ends with him leaving the room and going out onto the veranda. He is thus physically unable to hear the words spoken by his wife's servant and friend, Christophine, as she attempts to comfort Antoinette, and can only hear the sound of her voice and Antoinette's crying. However, the physical barrier which prevents him from hearing is also symbolic, reinforcing the sense of their inability to communicate, and their lack of understanding of each other. Rochester's attempt to interpret what is happening behind the closed door symbolises his alienation from Antoinette and her culture.

Toolan proposes a useful test for deciding whether a description emanates from a character's or a narrator's perspective; i.e., to prefix the description with the sentence, 'I, the narrator, am telling you that' (Toolan, 1998:115), a test which can precede any of the sentences in the examples given in 1) to 4) above. It is also useful for distinguishing FIS from other forms of speech presentation. For example; the sentence 'My dress was even dirtier than usual' discussed above cannot accurately be preceded by the sentence 'I, the narrator, am telling you that', since the perception and comment emanate from the perspective of the narrator's mother, not from that of Antoinette, the narrator. By contrast, in the DS examples discussed above, the narrator's reporting clauses provide information about the way the words are spoken, and can be preceded by this sentence, e.g., '(I, the narrator, am telling you that) Blount said drunkenly 'You can just - '. In this way it is possible to distinguish more clearly which parts of the sentence belong to the character and which to the narrator.

Leech and Short's speech continuum thus moves from a position of closeness to the character end of the scale, to a position which is under the complete control of the narrator, as follows;

NRS	NRSA	IS	FIS	DS
(Categories adapted from Leech and Short, 1981:344, and Short, 1996:288-311)				

However, while speech presentation is an important aid in allowing readers to form conclusions about the 'personality' of a character, it is the insight into a character's mind which gives rise to understanding and provides information concerning their motivation, reasoning, attitudes, and so on. The importance of such information is apparent in the examples from *The Handmaid's Tale*, in which Offred's

conversation with the new 'Ofglen' is interspersed with insights into her thoughts.

Category A narratives are obviously the most direct way of providing internal information, although Category B (R) narratives also provide information about characters' thoughts, feelings, perceptions etc.

3. 8. (ii) Thought Presentation

As with the speech continuum, the thought continuum moves from an impression of being presented with a direct representation of the characters' thoughts, to a 'Narrator's Representation of Thought Act' which is the most minimal category, and is strictly under narratorial control. In this respect, the categories of speech and thought presentation are similar, in that there can be more, or less, narratorial control over the information which is granted to the reader.

It should be noted that the 'free direct' category of speech and thought presentation was subsequently dropped from Short's development of the cline. In presentational terms, the category Free Direct Thought is the same as that for FDS, although the 'freer' forms of thought presentation have different effects from the speech counterparts, as will be discussed below. Leech and Short note that whereas direct speech is the norm for speech presentation, it is indirect thought which is the norm for thought presentation, due to the fact that

[...] it should always be remembered that the representation of the thoughts of characters is ultimately an artifice. We cannot see inside the minds of other people, but if the motivation for the actions and attitudes of characters is to be made clear to the reader, the representation of their thoughts, like the use of soliloquy on stage, is a necessary licence. (Leech and Short, 1981:337)

Short notes that direct thought (hereafter DT) is often used to produce an impression that characters are having 'imaginary conversations with themselves or others' (Short, 1996:312). The reported and reporting clauses which signal the presence of DT are the same as those connected with DS, as can be seen in the

following example, again from *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Antoinette is watching over her invalid brother who is sleeping.

Mr. Mason had promised to take him to England later on, there he would be cured, made like other people. 'And how will you like that?' I thought, as I kissed him. 'How will you like being made exactly like other people?'
(Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p.13)

The report of Antoinette's thought produces an impression that these are the words she would like to speak to her brother, but, not wanting to disturb him, they remain unspoken. Short also notes that DT can be used in conjunction with DS to bring out an 'internal/external world distinction (Short, 1996:313). A similar effect is produced here; the words, 'there he would be cured, made like other people' appear to be a representation of Mr. Mason's words through FIS, an impression which is reinforced by their repetition in Antoinette's mind. As in her relationship with Rochester, Antoinette's relationship with Mr. Mason, her English stepfather, is made uneasy as a result of their differing views. The contrast between the words spoken by Mason (external world) and their internal representation in Antoinette's mind therefore suggests an irony; she loves her brother as he is, and ponders on the effect of Mason's 'cure'.

Indirect Thought (or IT) takes the same form as IS; however there are differences in effect, as Simpson notes. He argues that by transforming a sentence such as "'John is a gentleman", she thought', into IT, the meaning becomes ambiguous e.g., "She thought that John was a gentleman" (Simpson, 1993:24), now suggesting that 'she' might be mistaken. Such changes in potential meaning between DT and IT illustrate the greater degree of narratorial control in the latter, since the narrator can comment on the narrator's thought processes, and suggest that they are mistaken. The example below is taken from Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, and illustrates the different effects associated with the different categories. The novel

begins with a story which is told to the first-person narrator by her mother, and describes the disgrace brought upon the narrator's family by one of her aunts in their native China. The narrator's aunt (who remains unnamed) becomes pregnant even though her husband has been away from home for a long time, and the villagers organise a raid upon her house, wrecking furniture and killing animals. The narrator's aunt subsequently drowns herself and her baby in the well immediately after giving birth. The story is intended as a warning to the narrator, and she is told that the family subsequently act as if her aunt had never existed. The narrator is intrigued, and goes on to imagine what circumstances must have been like then. Thus, a simple story told in DS is transformed into a complex tale in which the narrator speculates on the feelings of her aunt at that time.

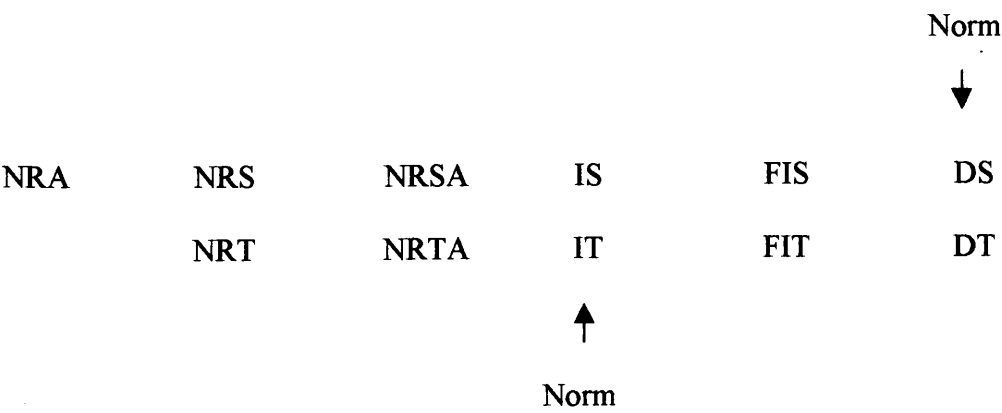
After the villagers left, their lanterns now scattering in various directions towards home, the family broke their silence and cursed her. 'Aiaa, we're going to die. Death is coming. Death is coming. Look what you've done. You've killed us. Ghost! Dead ghost! Ghost! You've never been born.' She ran out into the fields, far enough from the house so that she could no longer hear their voices, and pressed herself against the earth, her own land no more. When she felt the birth coming, she thought that she had been hurt. Her body seized together. 'They've hurt me too much,' she thought. This is gall, and it will kill me.' Her forehead and knees against the earth, her body convulsed and then released her onto her back. The black well of sky and stars went out and out for ever; her body and her complexity seemed to disappear. She was one of the stars, a bright dot in blackness, without home, without a companion, in eternal cold and silence. An agoraphobia rose in her, speeding higher and higher, bigger and bigger; she would not be able to contain it; there would be no end to fear. (Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, p.20)

The sentence, 'she thought that she had been hurt' is IT, and illustrates the character's misinterpretation of what is happening to her, as illustrated by the narrator's awareness that her pains are those of labour, not of injury. The move into DT, 'They've hurt me too much,' she thought.' This is gall, and it will kill me.' indicates that the narrator is growing more involved with the tale, imagining the aunt's thoughts in detail, and adding dramatic effect. Toolan notes that DT 'can often seem

too dramatic’ (Toolan, 1998:107 emphasis in original) but it is entirely appropriate in this instance. The story told to the narrator by her mother is intended to illustrate graphically the perils of bringing disgrace onto the family, and the fact that the aunt’s story is embellished so dramatically suggests that the lesson has been embedded in the narrator’s mind.

Like FIS, FIT is the most interesting and complex category, and like FIS in the speech continuum, is intermediate between DT and IT. However they differ in their relationship to the ‘norm’ and in their prevalent effects, due to the fact that the speech of others can be directly accessible to us whereas their thoughts are not. As Leech and Short note, the norm for speech presentation is DS, whereas the norm for thought presentation is IT, due to the inaccessibility of thoughts to external perception. Thus, ‘a mode which only commits the writer to the content of what was thought is much more acceptable as a norm’ (Leech and Short, 1981:345). In the speech presentation categories, FIS constitutes a move towards narratorial control, whereas FIT constitutes a move I the opposite direction, into the mind of the character and away from narratorial control. This can be illustrated by the following diagram;

The categories of thought presentation can be compared to the speech presentation categories as follows;



(Categories adapted from Leech and Short, 1981:344, and Short, 1996:288)

In the extract quoted above from *The Woman Warrior*, the phrase ‘she would not be able to contain it; there would be no end to fear’, is FIT, and constitutes a move away from the narratorial intervention in the previous examples into a more direct representation of the aunt’s mental processes. As with FIS, the markers of FIT include the presence of backshifted tense and third-person pronoun; e.g., the DT equivalent would be ‘I will not be able to contain it; there will be no end to fear’.

Just as the representation in DS of conversations between characters can help to illustrate the relationships between them, so the insight into their minds through FIT can serve as an indication of their perception of one another, an aspect to which I have alluded above in my discussion of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. A similar example is found in Pym’s *Quartet in Autumn*, another B (R) narrative in which characters communicate only at the most superficial level, but in which the insight into the characters’ minds allows the reader to understand their separate and lonely existences. In Chapter Two, section 7, I discussed the characterisation of Marcia as eccentric. Her only ties of affection are to her cat Snowy, now dead, and the surgeon who performed her mastectomy. After her retirement, it becomes increasingly necessary for Marcia to maintain these links with her past, and the following extract describes her sudden desire to locate her pet’s grave. The contrast between the insight into Marcia’s mind through FIT and that of her neighbour, Priscilla, who observes her behaviour, creates a sense of poignancy.

There was a sprawling bush of catmint, so the grave must be somewhere near there because Snowy had loved to roll in the plant, but it was quite indiscernible now, although Marcia parted the covering leaves and weeds with her hands. Then it occurred to her that if she were to dig in that bit of the garden, she would surely come upon the grave, perhaps uncover a fragment of the blue ripple cloth and then even find the bones.

She went to the shed and fetched a spade, but it was very heavy and if she had ever wielded it in the past, she was certainly unable to now. After my operation of course, she thought, trying once more to move the earth and the thick clotting of weeds - dandelions, thistles and bindweed,

plants with strong matted roots.

It was thus that Priscilla saw her, crouched at the bottom of the garden. What was she *doing*, trying to dig with that heavy spade?

(Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, pp. 115-116)

Marcia's peculiar behaviour is described from both an internal and an external perspective. The narration oscillates between a Narrator's Report of Action, (e.g., 'She went to the shed and fetched a spade'); DT ('After my operation, she thought'); and FIT (e.g. 'so the grave must be somewhere near there because Snowy had loved to roll in the plant'), the presence of FIT being marked by the distal deictic 'there', as appropriate to the past tense of the narration, rather than the proximal deictic 'here' which is appropriate to Marcia's situation. The instance of DT emphasises that this is a conscious thought on Marcia's part, stressing the importance she perceives to be conferred on her by her mastectomy, and the central role it now has in her mind. The instances of FIT serve to illustrate the way in which her bizarre behaviour is quite explicable in terms of Marcia's loneliness. For example, the information conveyed via FIT ('she would surely come upon the grave, perhaps uncover a fragment of the blue ripple cloth and then even find the bones') reveals that what is unacceptable behaviour from a 'normal' point of view, i.e., digging in the earth in order to find the bones of a cat, is perfectly normal for Marcia, as is evident in the matter-of-fact 'tone' of her thoughts; she misses her cat and wants to find his remains. The insight through FIT into Priscilla's thoughts, by contrast, shows her concern at Marcia's behaviour; the phrase 'What was she *doing*' attempts to represent her shock, and imitates the words that are 'spoken' internally, including the intonation implied by the emphasis on 'doing'. This produces an impression of what Priscilla might say to others, but Priscilla is alone and the words remain unvocalised. By representing Priscilla's thoughts through FIT some impression of her personality is conveyed, and the insight into her mind later reveals that her main concern is that Marcia's behaviour will prove

embarrassing for Priscilla personally, who is due to receive visitors, as discussed in Chapter Two, section 2. 7. (iii) and reproduced below.

Perhaps it was a fine enough evening to have drinks outside on the little patio they had made, but the view of the neglected garden next door would detract from the elegance of the occasion, and if Miss Ivory was going to go on digging in this disturbing way something would have to be done about it.
(Pym, *Quartet in Autumn*, p.116)

Again, the backshifted tense ‘was’ and the reference to Marcia as ‘Miss Ivory’ indicates that this is a representation of Priscilla’s thoughts through FIT; it is Priscilla who find Marcia’s behaviour ‘disturbing’, due to its potential to reflect badly on herself.

FIT allows the reader insights into the characters’ minds, while providing a narratorial frame which can be used to contrast the different perceptions of the characters, and/or the narrator. FIT thus constitutes less narratorial control than does IT, and is a move towards the character end of the scale. Short’s remaining categories, ‘Narrator’s Representation of a Thought Act’ and ‘Narrator’s Representation of Thought’ represent a move away from the character towards the narrator, and indicate a greater degree of narratorial control.

Like NRSA, the category NRTA refers to those instances in which the narrator presents minimal information about the type of thought which occurs; an example is found in the extract from *Wide Sargasso Sea* below, narrated by Rochester;

We mounted, turned a corner and the village was out of sight. A cock crowed loudly and I remembered the night before which we had spent in the town. (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p.31)

The phrase ‘I remembered the night before which we had spent in the town’ is NRTA; the type of thought act is reported (remembering) and the topic (what had occurred in town) but nothing else, although Rochester does subsequently provide more detail. An NRT is even more minimal, merely reporting that thought occurred,

but providing no information about the topic, nor what kind of thought it was, the example given by Short being ‘he spent the day thinking’ (Short, 1996:311). The potential for such uninformativeness to be exploited is found in the following example from *Jane Eyre*, in which Jane’s loneliness, hunger and cold on arriving at Lowood institution prevents her from sharing her thoughts with the reader e.g., ‘My reflections were too undefined and fragmentary to merit record’ (Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, p.52).

The various modes of speech and thought presentation are therefore capable of providing the reader with varying degrees of directness and freedom from narratorial control, allowing the impression that the reader is witnessing the speech and thoughts of characters more, or less, directly. The way in which the different categories are used throughout the course of a novel can be contrasted in order to provide, what Leech and Short describe as the ‘light and shade of conversation’ (1981:335). Similar effects can be produced through the employment of the different modes of thought presentation, allowing the character’s mental processes to be illuminated or hidden. Such differences, Leech and Short argue, have the potential to elicit sympathy for a character whose thoughts are presented to us. They comment that a writer who informs us about the thoughts of a character is ‘inviting us to see things from that character’s point of view’ (1981:338). However, the ability to see events from a particular point of view is no necessary guarantee of sympathy, particularly in the case of characters or narrators whose minds are unusual or different from the ‘norm’. This is an aspect which is relevant to the stories used in the two studies described in this thesis, and I will consider Fowler’s concept of ‘mind-style’ next.

3. 9 Fowler: ‘Mind-Style’

Fowler, building on the work of Halliday, (1971) considers the way in which ‘consistent linguistic choices build up a continuous, pervasive representation of the

world' (Fowler, 1996:213). Halliday argues that the choice of transitivity patterns in Golding's, *The Inheritors* produces an impression of a character who has little grasp of cause and effect relationships, and which is related to the 'ideational' function of language, the way in which the speaker, writer, or in this case, character 'embodies in language his experience of the phenomena of the real world' (Halliday, 1971). In this way, the impression is produced of, what Fowler terms, the character's or narrator's 'mind-style, as I will consider in section 3. 9 below. Fowler argues that choices of vocabulary, transitivity, and syntactic structures build into a cumulative picture of a character's world-view or mind-style (Fowler, 1996:213). Fowler illustrates this with the way in which Benjy's mind style in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* is produced through a process of 'underlexicalisation'. Lacking the appropriate term for the concepts which he wishes to express, Benjy resorts to circumlocutions which reflect a naïve consciousness.

Such an example is found in Winterson's *Sexing The Cherry*, set in the seventeenth century. The novel has two main first-person narrators; one is 'Dog-woman', a female of immensely grotesque proportions whose actions match her build, the other is her adopted son, Jordan. The emphasis in their respective narrative sections foregrounds their individual perceptions of one another, and the world around them. The access to Jordan's mind reflects a view of the world which is dissimilar to that of our own, but which is not unrecognisable. The access to the inner workings of the female narrator's mind however produces an impression that she is physically and mentally deviant, although not unintelligent, and has a tendency to take literally everything that is said to her. Some examples can serve to illustrate the unusual working of her mind. The following example occurs after Dog-woman has been listening to a sermon from the Old testament, in which the congregation are reminded

of Moses' law, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. She describes an incident on her way home, in which she decides to put into practice the teachings she has heard.

I had only a little way to walk home, and hardly expected to find such an early opportunity to exercise my calling. Hearing a horse behind me I moved to one side, but not soon enough to escape the touch of a whip. I turned in a fury and saw it to be a pock-marked, leather-faced, drab-whitted ancient, got up in grey with a flat lace collar too big for modesty. I pulled him from his horse and popped his eyeballs with my thumbs, and then, forcing open his jaw as I would to get a chicken bone out of a dog, I loosened his teeth with my heel and soon had them mostly out and wrapped up in his own handkerchief. (Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*, pp.84-85)

As the reader comes to understand the workings of the narrator's mind, she or he also understands the logic behind her otherwise incomprehensible actions. According to her own standards of decent and just behaviour, Dog-woman acts in ways she believes to be right, punishing those whose actions deviate from her own code of justice. Taking the words of the preacher literally, Dog-woman believes she is justified in physically damaging those who offend her. The access to her thoughts reveals a mind with no comprehension of the metaphorical, analogical or euphemistic nature of language, and reflects a view of the world in which people literally mean what they say. Her adopted son's tendency to roam the world is attributed to the fact that Dog-woman names him after the river in which he was found;

I should have named him after a stagnant pond and then I could have kept him, but I named him after a river and in the flood-tide he slipped away. (Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*, p.1)

Her tendency to focus on the literal meaning of words is further illustrated by the following example, in which Dog-woman is accosted by a man we might these days term a 'flasher', and asked to perform a sexual act.

"Put it in your mouth" he said. "yes, as you would a delicious thing to eat."

I like to broaden my mind when I can and I did as he suggested, swallowing it up entirely and biting it off with a snap.
(Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*, p.41)

The man's subsequent fainting fit is attributed to pleasure, as Dog-woman ponders on the recklessness of men, whom, she has been assured, enjoy being 'consumed in the mouth' (Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*, p.41)

Fowler's concept of mind-style shows how consistent linguistic choices build up an impression of the mind-style on different levels; my discussion of the examples from *Story of an African Farm* has attempted to illustrate the way in which the mind-style of the implied author can be reflected in the ideology of the text, and can be distinguished from her representation of the characters' ideologies. The example from *Sexing the Cherry* illustrates the way in which the implied author can represent a deviant mind-style by allowing the character/narrator to consistently misunderstand the figurative use of language.

Fowler's concept of mind-style is of relevance to the stories used in the studies described in this thesis, and will be considered further below. In my analyses of the stories I will argue that it is often the access to the character's mind which is capable of reducing sympathy for that character.

3. 10 Conclusion

The above discussion has now considered the different ways in which narratives may be told, the differences between Category A and B narratives, the various forms of speech and thought presentation available to an author and their potential effect on character evaluation, including the impression which may be produced of a character's and/or narrator's world view and ideology. Finally I have considered the way in which spatial and temporal aspects of text are related to the position of the narrator or character. Chapter Four will apply Simpson's framework of

analysis to Woolf's *Lappin and Lapinova*, the short story read by the participants in the preliminary study.

Chapter Four

Point of view in Woolf's *Lappin and Lapinova*.

4. 1 Introduction

Virginia Woolf's *Lappin and Lapinova* (1936) was chosen for use in the preliminary study because it is relatively short (ten pages), and has the potential for a female and male point of view to be identified (see Appendix One).

Lappin and Lapinova tells the story of a married couple, mainly through the consciousness of the woman, Rosalind, but with infrequent insights into her husband Ernest's point of view. The story begins on their wedding day and ends at a period approximately two years later, concentrating on specific incidents which are particularly significant from Rosalind's point of view, and which illustrate the changing relationship between husband and wife. During their honeymoon, Rosalind perceives that Ernest's nose 'twitches slightly' when he eats, reminding her of her pet rabbit. She consequently creates an imaginary persona for him, transforming him into 'King Lappin', and imagines him ruling over a kingdom of rabbits. Initially an eager participant in this fantasy, Ernest contributes to the imaginary world by describing the discovery of a small white hare in his kingdom, whom Rosalind identifies as (herself), 'Queen Lapinova', ruler of the adjoining territory. Thus in their shared fantasy world, Ernest and Rosalind become 'Lappin and Lapinova', both rulers over their own territory (p.72). In the early stages of their marriage, this fantasy is a refuge which helps the couple to feel 'in league together against the rest of the world' (ibid.). It is especially important for Rosalind, who feels that its existence helps her to survive in the midst of her husband's overwhelmingly large and wealthy family. However, Rosalind's increasing inability to discriminate between fantasy and reality is matched by a corresponding reluctance on Ernest's part to continue with the fantasy as he

becomes more and more involved with real-life responsibilities. He eventually 'kills off' Lapinova, effectively ending the fantasy by claiming that she has been 'Caught in a trap...killed...'. The story ends, 'So that was the end of that marriage', leaving the reader to decide for her or himself whether the narrator refers to the fantasy or the real-life relationship, thus ending with the ambiguity which has pervaded the text throughout, and which will be discussed in detail below. In this chapter, I will first consider the implied author/implied reader relationship and issues connected with characterisation, subsequently analysing the narrative structure of the story in accordance with Simpson's framework. Finally, I will consider themes which might be expected to act as triggers to predispose some readers to perform feminist readings.

4. 1. (i) Implied Author/Reader relationship in *Lappin and Lapinova*

In my discussion of the 'implied author' in Chapter Two, I considered the way in which our impression of an author is often a result of an accumulation of 'facts' which are projected onto her image, and which may or may not coincide with those of other readers, or the author herself. In Woolf's case, it is probably fairly unproblematic to argue that her implied reader will be predisposed to recognise clues and familiar themes which produce an impression of an implied (feminist) author. As Mills argues, certain 'codes' will be apparent to the implied (feminist) reader, and may have an influence on response. I will argue that the major theme of *Lappin and Lapinova* is that of 'marriage as trap', which arises as a result of the denial of Rosalind's desires, and her powerlessness to achieve her aims within marriage. This powerlessness, in a feminist reading, is responsible for her retreat into fantasy, an aspect upon which I will elaborate below. I have already alluded to similar themes in connection with readings of *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *The Awakening* in Chapter Two. *Lappin and Lapinova* similarly may contain sufficient codes for the implied

reader to interpret it as a variation of the romance genre, with marriage entailing an unhappy ending for women. Being predisposed to read as a feminist may result in a tendency for certain themes to be overdetermined, for example, the theme of 'marriage as prison' discussed in Chapter Two is a variation of the 'happy-ever-after' ending of the romantic novel and brings in its wake other attendant themes. In *Lappin and Lapinova*, the 'marriage as prison' theme is given a different 'slant' but is still recognisable as a variation on a familiar theme. The way in which marriage offers protection and status for women (Rosalind marries into a large and wealthy family) is problematized by such issues as male power over women and women's loss of identity within marriage. These are the main themes which inform a feminist reading of the story, but there are other related issues, such as the necessity of having children to ensure an heir. The 'problematic' reading of marriage is a result of (and is confined to) information about Rosalind's inner thoughts.

Implicit in my argument is the perception of cause and effect. I see Rosalind's marriage as the cause of her loss of freedom, a reading which can be seen as specific to the class to which Rosalind belongs (or has married into). The evocation of a person schema (Rosalind has married into a wealthy family) means that a corresponding schema is evoked for Ernest. He is a civil servant, educated at Rugby, and therefore powerful, of high status. Issues of class therefore also inform my reading of Rosalind's relative powerlessness; she is subordinate because of her role as Ernest's wife. We might compare this with *Jane Eyre*, for example, where Jane's 'subordinate' class does not prevent her from exerting some power over Rochester, even if it is only the power of leaving him. These issues should become clearer during the course of the discussion, and I will return to the 'marriage as trap' theme after my analysis of point of view in the story.

4. 2 Analysis of the Narrative Structure of *Lappin and Lapinova*

4. 2 (i) Overview

Simpson's framework will be used to give an impression of the narrative structure of the story as a whole, and to show how shifts in narrative perspective have the potential to position the reader in relation to the story. The powerful nature of Simpson's model means that it is capable of identifying subtle shifts in narrative mode, and in the chosen text, such changes are frequent. It is the way in which the reader responds (or not) to such shifts which should prove suggestive. Woolf's writing has a tendency to move swiftly in and out of characters' thought processes, yet the subtlety of this movement means that it may not always be noticed consciously by readers, if at all (Leech and Short, 1981:340). The kind of in-depth analysis allowed by Simpson's model allows me not only to indicate the predominant 'mood' of the story, but also to identify specific shifts in perspective, which have the potential to affect readers' responses to the characters and events described. Such perspectival changes are potentially influential in readers' interpretations of, and consequent reactions to, the characters' personalities and actions. Simpson's framework will be used therefore to provide a detailed analysis of the opening sections of the story, identifying with examples the four main types of narration used throughout the text, and suggesting the effect of these on reading positions. Having provided such exemplification, I will subsequently only discuss in detail those elements which are particularly relevant to issues of characterisation, and shifts in perspective which are important for the identification of conflicting or ambiguous points of view. The concept of ambiguity is an important consideration, since it is this factor which will be most interesting in assessing reader's responses to certain aspects of the story which are left indeterminate. Concentrating on the opening section in detail has an added

advantage, since important themes are present here which continue throughout the story and which form the basis of my interpretation. These will be discussed more fully as they emerge during the analysis. In addition, I will identify certain 'codes' in the text which may incline some readers to produce a feminist reading.

The story is narrated in the third-person, Simpson's 'Category B mode'. The presentation of the story as a whole is predominantly 'B in Reflector mode', or B(R), the Reflector being '...the character...whose psychological perspective is represented in a text' (Simpson, 1993:62). For the most part, Rosalind is the Reflector, but there are fleeting instances when Ernest becomes the Reflector. In addition there are instances of B (N) Neutral and B (N) -ve, which provide an external perspective. The narration which is filtered through Rosalind's perspective sometimes takes the B(R) + ve form, and sometimes the B(R) -ve form, depending on her alternating perceptions, as will be discussed below. There are also instances of B (N) + ve but these are relatively rare, and it is primarily the B (R) mode which is responsible for producing the 'feel' of the story.

The story begins in medias res with the short sentence 'They were married', and the first paragraph is 'related via an invisible non-participating narrator'(ibid.), B(N) mode.

The wedding march pealed out. The pigeons fluttered. Small boys in Eton jackets threw rice; a fox terrier sauntered across the path; and Ernest Thorburn led his bride to the car through that small crowd of complete strangers which always collects in London to enjoy other people's happiness or unhappiness. Certainly he looked handsome and she looked shy. More rice was thrown, and the car moved off.(p.69)

Initially, the impersonal mode of narration conforms to Simpson's B(N) Neutral, the events being described through categorical assertions with little evaluative language, with the exception of the use of 'small' and 'sauntered', which can be seen as relating to the narrator's visual perception rather than implying any

overt judgement. The appearance of the generic sentence ('that small crowd of strangers which always collects in London...') suggests a move towards B(N) + ve narration, foregrounding the modality of the narrator, as conveyed by the epistemic modal adverb 'always'. However this impression of certainty does not yet extend to knowledge of the characters. In this respect, the narration at this point seems to conform more closely to B (N) -ve, emphasising the epistemic and perception modalities of the narrator, a characteristic of the 'negative shading' resulting from the narrator's (assumed) ignorance of and estrangement from the characters. Evaluation of the couple is 'based on reference to physical appearance'(1993:66) using non-factive verbs e.g. 'looked', in 'Certainly he looked handsome and she looked shy.' This produces a distancing effect as the narration refuses access to inner knowledge of Rosalind and Ernest, which contrasts with a certainty about how they appear and what 'always' happens on occasions such as weddings. The apparently innocuous phrase 'leading his bride to the car' also relates to a theme which I will argue is central to the story, namely that of 'marriage as trap' which will be discussed further in section 4. 3 below.

The 'estranged' or distanced impression is reinforced by the effect of sharing the narrator's spatial viewpoint, which is apparently the same as that of the crowd which watches as the car moves off ('the car moved off') i.e., away from the narrator, who is physically distant from the characters. The narrator is temporally distanced, as indicated by the use of the past tense, reinforcing the impression of a narrator who does not share the same emotional and temporal environment as the characters at this point.

The opening paragraph begins with three short sentences which produce a feeling of abruptness, accentuated by the lack of cohesive ties between them. In other

words, the fact of the marriage, the sound of the wedding march and the fluttering of the pigeons are treated as of little importance, or rather, the activities of the birds are afforded as much importance as those of the people. Conversely, the appearance of a co-ordinating conjunction linking the fact of Ernest Thorburn 'leading his bride' to the car, with the more insignificant prior 'event', (the 'sauntering' of the fox terrier), reinforces the effect of distance, since the actions of the characters at this point are given no more significance than the other minor events which take place at the wedding.

The subtle shifts in modality from B (N) Neutral to B(N) -ve are effective in producing an impression of a narrator who has her own opinions, yet is external to the events described, and interprets what happens from outward appearances. The estranged narrator has similarities to the strangers who enjoy the 'happiness or unhappiness' of others, and the impersonal form of narration provides a frame for the B(R) mode which is the predominant form of narration in the rest of the story. The external, 'objective' B(N) -ve mode produces a distancing effect, providing only an impression of the characters as they appear to strangers, with no insight into their feelings, whether happy or unhappy. This symbolises the way that people often make evaluations of others based on physical appearance, and the possibility of mistakes, an important recurring theme, as Rosalind's increasing unhappiness and confusion is revealed via B (R) mode, and her perception of events is influenced by her 'faulty' visual perception, as will be discussed in detail below. The internal form of narration which follows this opening section and which forms a major part of the story illustrates the thought processes by which characters reach evaluations of people's behaviour based on external appearances, allowing the reader to question the reliability of such judgements.

On a more minor note, the introduction of the word ‘unhappiness’ in the context of a wedding, a normally happy occasion, is in keeping with another theme which develops as the story progresses, namely Rosalind’s fluctuating feelings of happiness and unhappiness, dependent upon her evaluation of her husband’s character which is based primarily on (her perception of) his physical appearance. The reader is invited to question whether or not Ernest actually possesses the qualities Rosalind perceives in him, or whether she has been mistaken. The movement into B(R) mode with Rosalind as Reflector is one of the reasons for the ambiguity which arises, since the subjectivity of this kind of internal narration is not counterbalanced by the B(N) Neutral or B(N) - ve modes, which neither confirms nor refutes Rosalind’s perceptions. Thus, three important themes are introduced which play a major part in the remainder of the story:-

- a) Personality evaluation based on physical appearance
- b) Unreliability of visual perception
- c) Fluctuation between states of happiness and unhappiness as a result of a) and b)

These themes will be discussed in detail below, as the narration now moves into B(R) mode, with Rosalind as Reflector.

4. 2 (ii) Rosalind as Reflector

The previously temporally unanchored narrative viewpoint of the first paragraph contrasts with the second paragraph which is precise, ‘That was on Tuesday. Now it was Saturday’, situating the wedding in the recent past. On a first reading, the sentence ‘That was on Tuesday’ could belong to either the narrator or to Rosalind; however, as the narration now moves into B(R) + ve, allowing the reader insights into Rosalind’s thoughts and highlighting her desires, and the previous sentence is seen to be retrospective, an instance of Rosalind remembering the wedding and hence FIT. The past tense is appropriate to both the narrator and to Rosalind;

however, 'Now it was Saturday', marks the move into FIT, as Rosalind ponders on her newly married state, i.e., the time is anchored in Rosalind's present but is framed by the past tense of narration. The difference between the latter and former sentences arises from the fact that whereas 'Tuesday' is a time set in the past for both narrator and character, 'Saturday' belongs to Rosalind's present only; it is Saturday 'now' for her. The sentence is thus a mixture of close and distal time deixis typical of FIT.

The narration proceeds in B(R) + ve mode; the sentence, 'Rosalind had still to get used to the fact that she was Mrs. Ernest Thorburn' illustrates that events are now moving into Rosalind's viewpoint. It precedes a move into FIT as the act of narration merges with the thoughts of the character;

Perhaps she would never get used to the fact that she was Mrs. Ernest
Anybody, she thought, as she sat in the bow window of the hotel looking over
the lake to the mountains, and waited for her husband to come down to
breakfast.

The phrase from 'as she sat...' indicates a move into B (N) Neutral. The movement between the B(R) and B(N) modes allows the blending of narratorial and character viewpoints, allowing access to Rosalind's thoughts while also providing a view of her from the 'outside'. In the latter part of the sentence, '...she sat in the bow window of the hotel looking over the lake to the mountains, and waited for her husband to come down to breakfast', the proximal deictics 'come...down' pinpoint the spatial viewpoint as Rosalind's. However, the blending of the B(R) and B(N) modes, the mixture of thoughts and narration allows a 'doubling' effect, providing both internal and external views, allowing the reader to 'see' what Rosalind sees, both literally and mentally, while also being given an 'outside' impression of her sitting in the bow window. This again is an important recurring feature, as Rosalind's visual perception is shown to be questionable as will be discussed further below. The 'perhaps' which begins the former part of the sentence belongs to Rosalind, since it is

followed by 'she thought', and illustrates the beginning of her uncertainty about her marriage. The interpretation of this as being an instance of FIT is helped by the sentences which follow:-

Ernest was a difficult name to get used to. It was not the name she would have chosen. She would have preferred Timothy, Antony or Peter. He did not look like Ernest either.

The sentence 'But here he was' that interrupts Rosalind's musings and brings the reader back to her present, indicates that the narration is oriented spatially and temporally around Rosalind, and, as Simpson notes, this mode of narration allows the Reflector to become 'momentarily or for prolonged periods, the deictic centre for the spatial viewpoint' (1993:69) allowing her to take on the characteristics of a homodiegetic narrator, an impression which is reinforced by the continued focus on Rosalind's thoughts. This is important in order for the reader to understand the reasons for Rosalind's perception of Ernest as a rabbit, and FIT is used consistently to emphasise the fact that this perception is unique to Rosalind.

But here he was. Thank goodness he did not look like Ernest - no. But what did he look like? She glanced at him sideways. Well, when he was eating toast he looked like a rabbit. Not that anyone else would have seen a likeness to a creature so diminutive and timid in this spruce, muscular young man with the straight nose, the blue eyes and the very firm mouth. But that made it all the more amusing. His nose twitched very slightly when he ate. So did her pet rabbit's. (p.69)

The emphasis on outward appearances which was noted at the beginning of the story continues, but it is now Rosalind's epistemic and perceptual modality which is highlighted, with the exception of the narrative sentence 'she glanced'. In particular, this has an effect of reinforcing the impression that Rosalind's knowledge of Ernest's character is based on his outward appearance, not on any knowledge of the 'real' Ernest. At the same time, the expression of Rosalind's desires through boulomaic modality in B (R) + ve mode ('It was not the name she would have chosen...she would

have preferred...'), suggests a discrepancy between the 'real' Ernest and the person Rosalind 'would have chosen', causing Rosalind to build up a potentially false impression of her husband's character based on the way that (she perceives) that he looks. Her perception of Ernest as a rabbit is portrayed through FIT apart from the sentence 'She glanced at him sideways', and the fact that the information that Rosalind looks at Ernest 'sideways' is narrated in B(N) Neutral mode is important, since, cumulatively, references to Rosalind's (distorted) vision help to build an impression of her (flawed) visual perception, an aspect to which I will return below.

Rosalind recognises at this early stage that the qualities she sees in Ernest are not likely to be shared by others ('Not that anyone else would have seen...') and the information, 'But that made it all the more amusing' suggests that she realises, at this point at least, that she is the only person to see this about Ernest, although he accedes to her perception. Again there is the potential for ambiguity, in that the comment 'Not that anyone else would have seen...' could be read as B (N) mode. The interpretation of this as B (R) or B(N) has potential differences in response, since if it is seen to be a narrative comment, then Rosalind's vision is corroborated; if not, then she is a potentially unreliable source of information. The unreliability of Rosalind's perception is a crucial theme in the story, since her happiness comes to depend upon seeing Ernest in this particular way. Since the creation of 'King Lappin' is based on Rosalind's perception of Ernest's 'rabbit-ness' and this is something which no-one else perceives, there is a possibility that not only is she mistaken, but that she is (unconsciously) trying to transform Ernest into someone else.

In the early stages at least, Rosalind appears to be aware of the discrepancy between Ernest as a rabbit (i.e., the way that she sees him), and Ernest as a person,

(the way that he is seen by others), and initially the use of FIT shows that she has to work at this transformation.

But that was absurd. He was not a tame rabbit, whatever he was. She turned it into French. "Lapin," she called him. But whatever he was, he was not a French rabbit. He was simply and solely English - born at Porchester Terrace, educated at Rugby; now a clerk in His Majesty's Civil Service. So she tried "Bunny" next; but that was worse. "Bunny was someone plump and soft and comic; he was thin and hard and serious. Still, his nose twitched. "Lappin," she exclaimed suddenly; and gave a little cry as if she had found the very word she looked for.

"Lappin, Lappin, King Lappin," she repeated.

It seemed to suit him exactly. Why? She did not know. (p.70)

Apart from the digression into B (N) - ve (i.e., 'she exclaimed suddenly; and gave a little cry as if she had found the very word she looked for'), the rest of this is a mixture of B(R) + ve ('He was not a tame rabbit...he was thin and hard and serious..'), and B(R) - ve ('It seemed to suit him exactly. Why? She did not know'), emphasising the contrast between Rosalind's certainty about what Ernest is, and her uncertainty about why she should see him in a different way from everyone else. Her lack of knowledge concerning the reasons for her unique perception of Ernest is reinforced by repetition, ('whatever he was'), words of estrangement, ('it seemed'), and the lack of an answer to her self-questioning, ('Why? She did not know'). The distinction between what is 'real', and what is perceived, is noted by Rosalind herself at this point, but she becomes less aware of the boundary between fantasy and reality as the story progresses.

Thus the B(R) mode is effective in stressing the subjectivity of a Reflector whose judgements are based on visual perception, aided by the movement into FIT which illustrates Rosalind's thoughts and self-confessed lack of knowledge concerning the reasons for her judgements, rendering those perceptions unreliable. The B(R) mode is ideal for this story, which hinges around Rosalind's fluctuating states of happiness and unhappiness based on her alternating perception of her

husband, and symbolising her increasing inability to distinguish between what is real and what is fantasy. The question of her reliability is left open for the reader's interpretation, since it is not confirmed or denied by any objective form of narration. The contrast between a neutral or estranged external viewpoint, and a subjective and confused internal viewpoint, necessitates a judgement on the part of the reader concerning Rosalind's reliability. In addition, the points raised so far show how, even at this early stage, the text provides clues that can produce in the reader a premonition of Rosalind's subsequent inability (or unwillingness) to see things as they really are, a tendency to retreat into fantasy in order to escape from her real life problems of coping with a new husband and his intimidating family.

One difficulty with attempting to apply Simpson's model to this text is that he suggests a distinction between the B(R) + ve and B(R) - ve modes, based on the difference between the 'positive shading' of the former, which foregrounds the narrator's or Reflector's 'desires, duties, obligations and opinions'. The epistemic and perception systems are simultaneously suppressed in order that '...propositions are not predicated on the perhaps limited knowledge of the narrator.' (1993:56). The negative shading of the latter, Simpson argues, foregrounds the epistemic and perception modalities, relying on inferences based on human perception (ibid:58). However, in this story, the epistemic, perception and deontic systems are all foregrounded, as Rosalind's desires, her dependence on perception as an aid to character evaluation, and her frequent uncertainty about her judgements, are all important elements in rendering her unreliable as a Reflector. The possibility that a narrator or Reflector can be certain about some things, while remaining ignorant in other ways is apparent, and was noted also in the introductory section, with regard to the B (N) narration of the opening paragraph. Therefore, while the type of modality used provides useful

information about the opinions and beliefs of a narrator or Reflector, 'positive' and 'negative' shading are present simultaneously. In fact, the movement between positive and negative shading becomes more important towards the end of the story, as Rosalind's loss of certainty becomes increasingly evident. It is precisely this feature which makes this story plausible, since Rosalind's lack of knowledge about her husband's true personality, and her apparent desire to transform him into something she does know, are factors which give it substance. The 'positive shading' of B (R) + ve mode relates to the foregrounding of the deontic and boulomaic systems, and it is true that Rosalind's desires are stressed. However, it is the denial of Rosalind's desires, the fact that they are unfulfilled, and that she is obliged to act in certain ways, that is partly responsible for her unhappiness. For example, 'It was not the name she would have chosen...she would have preferred Timothy, Antony or Peter', emphasises both her desire and indicates her powerlessness. This seems to be true of all the examples of B(R) + ve narration in this text, suggesting the conflict between Rosalind's desires and her obligations as a wife.

As noted, the story begins in B (N) mode, and returns to this mode on occasions throughout the story, when the narrator assumes a position outside of the consciousness of either of the characters. The movement between the B(R) and B (N) modes allows for a neutral position between the viewpoints of the two main characters. Having narrated Ernest's rabbit-like qualities as perceived by Rosalind, the story moves temporarily out of B (R) mode into B (N) Neutral, providing a report of DS between the couple, with Rosalind explaining the reason why she is looking at Ernest so intently.

"It's because you're like a rabbit, Ernest," she said.

"Like a wild rabbit," she added, looking at him. "A hunting rabbit; a King Rabbit; a rabbit that makes laws for all the other rabbits." (p.70)

The withdrawal from Rosalind's consciousness into B (N) Neutral offers a way of 'standing back' from her viewpoint before moving temporarily back into B (R) mode, this time with Ernest as Reflector.

Ernest had no objection to being that kind of rabbit, and since it amused her to see him twitch his nose - he had never known that his nose twitched - he twitched it on purpose. (p.70)

We already know that Rosalind finds it 'amusing' that she is the only person to see Ernest's rabbit-like qualities. The information that 'he had never known that his nose twitched' could be seen B (N) mode, but more accurately seems to belong to Ernest, a rare insight into his thoughts via B (R) mode. This can be seen as reinforcing the impression that Rosalind's perception is unreliable, since she tells Ernest something about himself which no one else can see and of which he previously has not been aware. This, combined with the fact that he 'had no objection' to being the kind of rabbit that Rosalind describes, points to this being an insight into Ernest's thoughts. Ambiguity arises partly from the fact of Rosalind having been the Reflector in the previous sections, and it would be possible to see the instances above as Rosalind's interpretation of Ernest's behaviour. In this respect, the factive verb 'know' would belong to Rosalind's point of view, since Ernest didn't 'know' that his nose twitches. It is Rosalind who 'knows' that his nose twitches, a 'fact' which is thrown into doubt. Either interpretation is plausible, and the preference of one interpretation over another is less important than the information that is provided, the crucial points being that:-

- a) Rosalind believes that she knows something about Ernest that he has never known about himself, and
- b) at this stage of their marriage, he believes her and wants to please her.

Equally important is the fact that Ernest is prepared to accept the kind of rabbit identity that Rosalind envisages for him. We already know Ernest's social position, and the fact that Rosalind changes him into 'a wild rabbit', 'A hunting rabbit; a King Rabbit; a rabbit that makes laws for all the other rabbits', after she looks at him (and presumably sees the expression on his face), implies that she feels that the usual rabbit attributes, timidity, and smallness, as well as nose-twitching, are not really in keeping with Ernest's appearance or his social standing. Again, this suggests a discrepancy between the way she wants him to be and the way he is 'really'.

Moves into B(N) neutral mode do not allow any overt opinion of the characters, suggesting that there is some ambiguity due to the fact of having an unreliable main Reflector. Rosalind's opinion is never overtly commented on by the more objective forms of narration, and is only accepted in the early stages by Ernest, at a time when he is humouring Rosalind 'on purpose', and 'because it amused her'. This pattern is repeated throughout the story, with Rosalind's perception of events being uncorroborated by the B (N) Neutral form of narration which frames it, and which is emphasised by the concentration on the outward appearance of characters noted earlier. An interesting example of B(R) mode occurs when the move into FIT involves several characters at once, when Ernest's deliberate nose-twitching causes Rosalind some amusement.

And she laughed and laughed; and he laughed too, so that the maiden ladies and the fishing man and the Swiss waiter in his greasy black jacket all guessed right; they were very happy. But how long does such happiness last? they asked themselves; and each answered according to his own circumstances.
(p.70)

The certainty implied by the characters having 'all guessed right' in B(N) + ve, is undermined by the fact that this opinion is based on the outward manifestation of happiness, laughter, and questions its ability to last (B(R) -ve). The reader is denied

access to individual opinions, ('each answered according to his own circumstances'), suggesting a Neutral tone, where 'events and characters are viewed dispassionately...' (Simpson, 1993:73). In this respect, there are parallels between the other people in the hotel and the strangers at the wedding, who have no way of knowing whether Rosalind and Ernest are really happy. The move into the minds of the other characters who observe only Rosalind's and Ernest's outward behaviour is matched by a corresponding refusal to convey any overt narratorial judgement. Rosalind and Ernest's thoughts are interspersed only with the most impersonal form of narration, B (N) Neutral, necessitating a decision on behalf of the reader as to the reliability of the characters' perceptions. Thus, Ernest and Rosalind may be happy 'now', but the fact of having its duration questioned implies that the happiness will not last.

During the early part of their marriage, Ernest and Rosalind share the fantasy world and the merging of their viewpoints emphasises this through the B (R) + ve mode in which they are co-Reflectors.

No one guessed that there was such a place, and that of course made it all the more amusing. It made them feel, more even than most young married couples, in league together against the world. (p.72)

The fantasy world at this point is something which both share, and is a form of secret communication between them. The narration then returns to Rosalind's consciousness as she muses on her feelings of being an outsider in Ernest's family. The change to Rosalind as single Reflector allows an insight into her apparently greater need for the imaginary world; it is more than a shared fantasy, for her it is necessary for survival.

Without that world, how, Rosalind wondered, that winter could she have lived at all? (p.72)

4. 2 (iii) Dual Vision: the Blending of Internal and External Point of View

The discussion above has suggested that the implied reader is invited to question the reliability of Rosalind's perceptions. However, the story also emphasises the distinction between external and internal appearances in the following ways;

- a) Rosalind's perception of Ernest by external appearances;
- b) Rosalind's perception of other members of the family by external appearances;
- c) Rosalind's perception of her own external appearance contrasted with her inner feelings.

As noted, Rosalind's perception of Ernest's 'personality' is based on his physical appearance. Of crucial importance for understanding Rosalind's viewpoint is an incident involving the golden wedding anniversary dinner of Ernest's parents. The incident relates Rosalind's dawning realisation that Ernest is, after all, a Thorburn and therefore part of the real world of his family that she finds so alien.

No, she was not happy. Not at all happy. She looked at Ernest, straight as a ramrod with a nose like all the noses in the family portraits; a nose that never twitched at all. (p.73)

The dinner party episode is narrated in B (R) mode, and Rosalind's opinions about her husband's family, her feelings of isolation from them and their lifestyle, illustrate the positive shading of the B (R) + ve form, yet beginning with the negativity of the lexical verb of perception 'wondered' in the above example. The foregrounding of Rosalind's feelings at the necessity of attending the dinner party ('She dreaded that party') is followed by her recognition that Ernest's nose has never twitched, and her realisation that her identity is threatened by her marriage into the Thorburn family. This realisation is narrated in a way which contrasts her external appearance, both how she might appear to others and how she appears to herself in a mirror, with her inner feelings.

She was half-hidden by the great chrysanthemums that curled their red and gold petals into large, tight balls. Everything was gold [...]

The raw white fog outside had been turned into a golden mesh that blurred the edges of the plates and gave the pineapples a rough golden skin. Only she herself in her white wedding dress peering ahead of her with her prominent eyes seemed insoluble as an icicle. (pp.73/4)

Initially, the 'external' effect produced by 'seemed' to describe her appearance suggests an 'outside' view of Rosalind, the distancing effect of B (N) - ve categorised by such words of estrangement. However, this can be re-categorised as B(R) - ve as a result of the following;-

She felt that her icicle was being turned to water. She was being melted; dispersed; dissolved into nothingness; and would soon faint. (p.74)

The reference to her 'seeming' to be 'insoluble as an icicle' is an insight into Rosalind's perception of herself, and emphasises the potential for appearances to be deceptive. The wedding dress, an external symbol of marriage, should offer her protection, but inwardly she feels that she is being 'melted; dispersed; dissolved' in the midst of Ernest's family. Again, the use of FIT allows both an impression of Rosalind's outward appearance, (her 'prominent eyes'), and her inner feelings, particularly with reference to her being 'half-hidden' which can refer either to her own perception, or to a view of her from an external perspective. The reader is thus given a double perspective: Rosalind's vision is obstructed by the flowers, and Rosalind is half hidden from the view of the others. These factors, combined with the references to fog, the 'blurring' of the plates and the fact that Rosalind has to 'peer' forward, reinforce the impression that her dependence on visual perception is unreliable. In addition, the external view symbolises the apparent security of her position from an outside view, including the trappings of wealth which are shown to be illusory ; Rosalind feels anything but secure, and her distorted vision causes her to perceive Ernest's family as 'larger' than they are.

[...] the round red faces [...] seemed doubled in the giddiness that overcame her; and magnified in the gold mist that enhaloed them. (p. 74)

In these surroundings, Rosalind's vision is 'blurred', and renders her powerless against the 'doubled' and 'magnified' Thorburn family, until 'rescued' by Ernest. The 'fog' which blurs Rosalind's perception of the dinner table is reinforced by the other references to distorted vision (blurred, doubled, magnified) which reflect Rosalind's distorted vision of the real world. The Thorburn's wealth as symbolised by the gold imagery which 'blinds' Rosalind, threatens her with a loss of her own identity.

However, from the perception of Ernest as a Thorburn like all the others, the introduction of the subject of rabbits into the dinner party conversation causes Rosalind to 'peep' at Ernest, perceiving the return of his nose-twitching. Yet to 'peep' at something is not to look at it properly, reinforcing her faulty perception suggesting that she may not see Ernest correctly, and that the transformation in his facial appearance may actually be only in her imagination. It is worth quoting the whole of this transformation in order to show how great an effect this perception has on Rosalind's attitude to the Thorburns.

Peeping between the chrysanthemums she saw Ernest's nose twitch. It rippled, it ran with successive twitches. And at that a mysterious catastrophe befell the Thorburns. The golden table became a moor with the gorse in full bloom; the din of voices turned to one peal of lark's laughter ringing down from the sky. It was a blue sky - clouds passed slowly. And they had all been changed - the Thorburns. She looked at her father-in-law, a furtive little man with dyed moustaches. His foible was collecting things - seals, enamel boxes, trifles from eighteenth-century dressing tables which he hid in the drawers of his study from his wife. Now she saw him as he was - a poacher, stealing off with his coat bulging with pheasants and partridges to drop them stealthily into a three-legged pot in his smoky little cottage. That was her real father-in-law - a poacher. And Celia, the unmarried daughter, who always nosed out other people's secrets, the little things they wished to hide - she was a white ferret with pink eyes, and a nose clotted with earth from her horrid underground nosings and pokings. Slung round men's shoulders in a net, and thrust down a hole - it was a pitiable life - Celia's; it was none of her fault. So she saw Celia. And then she looked at her mother-in-law - whom they dubbed The Squire. Flushed, coarse, a bully - she was all that, as she stood returning thanks, but

now that Rosalind - that is Lapinova - saw her, she saw behind her the decayed family mansion, the plaster peeling off the walls, and heard her, with a sob in her voice, giving thanks to her children (who hated her) for a world that had ceased to exist. (p.75)

The vision which appears to Rosalind on her perception that Ernest's nose twitches allows her to escape from the real world of the Thorburns into the more appealing rabbit kingdom, and symbolises the double perspective that Rosalind is given due to her other identity as Lapinova. Only from the safety of her 'other self' can Rosalind contemplate the reality of the position of the female members of the family. The double perspective of hiding and being hidden suggests that the 'protection' afforded by marriage may be confining, yet may be preferable to a single life. As 'Lapinova', Rosalind realises that the unlikeable Celia, the 'unmarried daughter', (i.e. one who lacks a favourable identity) is struggling for survival; 'Slung round men's shoulders, in a net, and thrust down a hole - it was a pitiable life - Celia's; it was none of her fault.'. Similarly, she is able to see that her apparently powerful mother-in-law is also living an imaginary life; her 'real' life consists of a 'decayed mansion' and children who hate her, yet still she gives thanks '...for a world that had ceased to exist.'. Faced with a horrible reality, Ernest's mother pretends that nothing is wrong. Given the grim picture of entrapment and sadness of the real world for these women, the world of Lapinova seems preferable, with the freedom that this identity implies. Rosalind can only escape from the real world through the transforming power of her imagination, drawing her more firmly into fantasy. The fact that she is half hidden by the flowers symbolises the way in which she has only seen half the picture, and is improperly perceived by others. She recognises the entrapment of the other women but initially fails to relate this to her own position. Her happiness depends on seeing Ernest's nose twitch, transforming him into King Lappin, and herself into Queen

Lapinova, his equal; her unhappiness results from the recognition that perhaps his nose has never twitched, and that therefore he is Ernest Thorburn, and that as his wife, she must accept the role expected of her. No objective narration confirms that Ernest's nose does actually twitch, but the fact that this is what Rosalind 'sees' is enough to allow her to 'see' his family as they really are, and to be less intimidated by them as a consequence. Whether or not Ernest consciously twitches his nose, or whether his nose twitches unconsciously, or if in fact it twitches at all, are all matters which are left to the reader to decide. Significantly however, the impression is given that Ernest's nose-twitching is something which is not controlled by him: unlike the earlier episode in which Ernest twitches his nose on purpose to amuse Rosalind, the emphasis is now on Rosalind's visual perception, which appears to be faulty. The 'fact' that she 'saw his nose twitch' is undermined by the hyperbolic descriptions, ('It rippled, it ran with successive twitches'), suggesting that her imagination causes her to see something which is less believable than simple twitching. The narration which follows this episode is a mixture of B(N) Neutral, reporting the direct speech between the couple after leaving the party, and B(R) mode.

"Oh, King Lappin!...if your nose hadn't twitched just at that moment, I should have been trapped!"
 "But you're safe," said King Lappin, pressing her paw.
 (p.75)

The phrase 'pressing her paw' confirms that this is narration which is still mediated through Rosalind's consciousness, since it is she who experienced the vision of the imaginary world, and she who is presumably still affected by it. Ernest's non-committal 'But you're safe' declines to corroborate or contradict Rosalind's viewpoint. The blending of the two modes has the advantage of illustrating the way that the fantasy world is beginning to permeate Rosalind's real world; the phrase 'pressing her paw' is a reflection of her increasing inability to discriminate between fantasy and

reality. Similarly, the vision of the moor is more real to her than the dinner party, as is evident in the factive verbs in the description e.g., ‘the golden table became a moor’ and ‘they had all been changed’. Everything in the imaginary world is described as a fact, and the verbs reflect this, whereas the real world is less distinct, portraying Rosalind’s imperfect perceptions.

The story now moves on a period of two years, and again is situated spatially and temporally from Rosalind’s point of view, on ‘a winter’s night’, (p.75) when Ernest ‘came home’ from the office. This is still B(R) mode, and again the narration moves from a report of direct speech, to a narration coloured by Rosalind’s thoughts. as she realises that Ernest is no longer as involved in the fantasy.

“What do you think happened to me to-day?” she began as soon as he had settled himself down with his legs stretched to the blaze. “I was crossing the stream when-”

“What stream?” Ernest interrupted her.

“The stream at the bottom, where our wood meets the black wood,” she explained.

Ernest looked completely blank for a moment.

“What the deuce are you talking about?” he asked.

“My dear Ernest!” she cried in dismay. “King Lappin,” she added, dangling her little front paws in the firelight. But his nose did not twitch. Her hands - they turned to hands - clutched the stuff she was holding; her eyes popped half out of her head. It took him five minutes at least to change from Ernest Thorburn to King Lappin; and while she waited she felt a load on the back of her neck, as if somebody were about to wring it. (p.76)

The oscillation between the B (R) and B (N) modes again produces a dual vision; Rosalind’s inner feelings, ‘she felt’, and her visual perception are highlighted, including the perception of her hands as ‘paws’. The external view of her (‘her eyes popped half out of her head’) is combined with an internal insight into her feelings and suggests the reason for her appearance, i.e., ‘she felt a load on the back of her neck, as if somebody were about to wring it’. Rosalind relies on Ernest’s collusion in the imaginary world, and when this is denied, the fantasy evaporates, (they changed to

hands), changing her perception of herself. When she realises that Ernest's nose does not twitch, a move into B (R) - ve indicates Rosalind's loss of certainty concerning Ernest, a realisation that her perception of his physical appearance is mistaken, and that therefore she may also have been mistaken about the qualities that she has perceived in him.

At last she turned on the light and looked at Ernest lying beside her. He was sound asleep. He snored. But even though he snored, his nose remained perfectly still. It looked as if it had never twitched at all. Was it possible that he was really Ernest; and that she was really married to Ernest? A vision of her mother-in-law's dining-room came before her; and there they sat, she and Ernest, grown old, under the engravings, in front of the sideboard...It was their golden wedding day. She could not bear it. (p.76)

Her scrutiny of Ernest's face, in particular his (non-twitching) nose leads to a questioning of her original perception in FIT e.g., 'Was it possible that he was really Ernest?'. The adverb 'really' reinforces the impression that 'King Lappin' does not really exist, and now the vision is of a future *real* life, brought about as a result of seeing Ernest with a nose that had never twitched, suggesting that Rosalind has been mistaken all along. Even her impression that 'for a moment his nose seemed to twitch of its own accord', utilises words of estrangement to destabilise this perception. Her ability now to see Ernest properly 'now' is emphasised by the fact that she turns on the light and looks at him, no 'peeping' or glancing' this time. There is a corresponding growing sense of bewilderment as the narration moves more definitely into B(R) - ve mode, illustrating Rosalind's loss of certainty following her realisation that she has been deluded in her perception of Ernest. The non-factive words are italicised.

Next day she could settle to nothing. She *seemed* to have lost *something*. She *felt as if* her body had shrunk; it had grown small, and black and hard. Her joints *seemed* stiff too, and when she looked in the glass, which she did several times as she wandered about the flat, her eyes *seemed* to burst out of her head, like currants in a bun. The rooms also *seemed* to have shrunk. (p.77)

Rosalind's perception of herself is even more uncertain than at the dinner party, and the words of estrangement reinforce the impression that she is unsure what is happening to her. Escaping from the confines of the flat, Rosalind is shocked to see a stuffed hare in the Natural History Museum, and although its description bears a frightening resemblance to herself, recognised only sub-consciously level.

[...]the first thing she saw when she went in was a stuffed hare standing on sham snow with pink glass eyes. Somehow it made her shiver all over.
(p.77)

The 'somehow' relates to Rosalind's sense of bewilderment, and is in contrast to the previous references to her appearance, which stress her 'prominent', 'popping' and 'bursting' eyes. The detachment from her own physical appearance which was noticeable at the dinner party ('she... seemed insoluble as an icicle') is now more evident, as she appears to recognise only subconsciously her similarity to the stuffed hare. Rosalind becomes increasingly confused about the boundaries between real life and fantasy, resulting in what can be seen as parallel versions of the same incident.

She went home and sat over the fire, without a light, and tried to imagine that she was out alone on a moor; and there was a stream rushing; and beyond the stream a dark wood. But she could get no further than the stream. At last she squatted down on the bank on the wet grass, and sat crouched in her chair, with her hands dangling empty, and her eyes glazed, like glass eyes, in the fire light. Then there was the crack of a gun...She started as if she had been shot. It was only Ernest, turning his key in the door. (p.78)

The merging of modes allows two narratives to be intermingled, an external distanced narration, and an internal perspective which reflects Rosalind's confused state of mind. The verb 'tried', in 'she tried to imagine' implies failure; she is only partially successful, as is reflected in the dual vision afforded by the insight into Rosalind's mind and the external narration e.g., 'she squatted...on the wet grass', 'she sat crouched in her chair'. Rosalind's inability to continue the fantasy is combined with a change into B (N) - ve, as the narration emphasises the inaccessibility of

Rosalind's mind. Her external appearance is emphasised (e.g., 'hands dangling empty' 'eyes glazed like glass eyes'), followed by a sudden return to Rosalind's perception; 'Then there was a crack of a gun'. Again, this is followed by the sentence 'she stared as if she had been shot' which could either be by Rosalind's perception, or external narration. Similarly, the following sentence is ambiguous (e.g., it was only Ernest...'); however, it is more likely to be Rosalind's perception of events, suggesting that her alarm has startled her out of the fantasy world, and signalling a return to normality. Just as the introduction of 'unhappiness' in the description of the wedding jars with our usual expectations, the association of gunshots with the sound of Ernest's key has an unsettling effect; what should be a welcome sound is tinged with thoughts of violence, and is confirmed by Ernest's decision to 'kill off' Lapinova.

The narration through Rosalind's consciousness allows a vivid depiction of her struggles to 'cross the stream' in her fantasy world and foregrounds her inability to achieve her aims. The narration in B(N) -ve describing Rosalind's external appearance shows the similarity between Rosalind and the stuffed hare (her eyes glazed like glass eyes), an image incidentally which is also associated with Celia, (a white ferret with pink eyes). The contrast between the internal and external perspectives is a contrast between the real world of sitting rooms, a chair by the fire and Ernest turning his key in the lock, and the fantasy world of streams and grass and guns. This merging has the effect of showing how the fantasy world has become reality for Rosalind, and the return of her husband and his destruction of the fantasy effectively ends Rosalind's 'escape route': her 'waiting' in real life mirrors the 'waiting' of Lapinova on the banks of the stream, and neither can escape.

For ten seconds he stood there, silent; and she waited, feeling hands tightening at the back of her neck.
 "Yes," he said at length. "Poor Lapinova..." He straightened his tie at the looking-glass over the mantelpiece.

"Caught in a trap," he said, "killed," and sat down and read the newspaper. So that was the end of that marriage. (p.78)

Recognition that there is no escape even in the imaginary world is the 'death' of Rosalind's attempt to convince herself that she is not trapped in a marriage with Ernest. Narrated through Rosalind's consciousness, the reader is presented with her feelings of fear and dread, and as the oscillation between the B (N) Neutral modes and B(R) modes ceases, ending with the B (N) Neutral mode, an impression is given of Rosalind's 'voice' also ceasing. Moving from an internal perspective ('she waited, feeling hands tightening at the back of her neck'), the effect of the B (N) Neutral mode is to reinforce this impression, concluding with the ambiguous, 'So that was the end of that marriage.' which could be taken to refer to either the fantasy or real relationship. Since there has been no evidence that Lappin and Lapinova are 'married', it could be taken to refer to the marriage of Ernest and Rosalind. Once again, the ambiguity results in the reader having to decide for her or himself, since Rosalind's input has now ceased and the narration declines to offer any guidance.

4. 2 (iv) Ernest's Point of View

The B(R) mode is particularly effective in its ability to represent the way that Rosalind gradually becomes less able to separate the imaginary world from the real world, a process which is reflected in the 'muddling' of thoughts and narration through FIT. Ernest's thoughts, by contrast, usually have to be inferred from his speech and actions, and quite often his reactions are given in the form of reported speech, placing the reader in a similar position to that of Rosalind, being able only to infer his thoughts and attitudes from what he says. Apart from the episode where we are told that 'Ernest had no objection to being that kind of rabbit...he had never known that his nose twitched...' (p.70), we are told of Ernest's feelings on only one other occasion. In

the early stages of the fantasy, when the couple share the imaginary world, Rosalind asks Ernest to describe the hare which King Lappin discovers in his kingdom.

“Yes,” said Ernest, looking at her as she had looked at him, “a smallish animal; with eyes popping out of her head, and two little front paws dangling.” It was exactly how she sat, with her sewing dangling in her hands; and her eyes, that were so big and bright, were certainly a little prominent.

“Ah, Lapinova,” Rosalind murmured.

“Is that what she’s called?” said Ernest - “the real Rosalind?” He looked at her. He felt very much in love with her. (p.71)

Ernest’s feelings for Rosalind are thus also based on physical appearance. The phrase ‘he felt’ is B (R) + ve and follows the description of her appearance. In addition, ‘felt’ may be compared with the alternative, i.e., ‘he was’. In the former example, it is possible that Ernest’s feelings are transient. However, whereas Rosalind uses Ernest’s appearance as a basis for character evaluation, Ernest’s feelings of love are apparently based on Rosalind’s physical attractiveness, her ‘big and bright’ eyes. However, some ambiguity arises from the description which is based on Ernest’s perception of Rosalind. The phrase ‘eyes popping out of her head’ which he uses to describe Lapinova is apparently based on his perception of Rosalind, ‘It was exactly how she sat...’. However, the merging of this description with the B(N) -ve mode undermines his perception with a modified and less unkind viewpoint, ‘her eyes...were certainly a little prominent’. Ernest’s feelings of love are based on his perception of Rosalind’s appearance and this is not entirely accurate, though apparently less unrealistic than Rosalind’s perception of him.

The move into B(R) - ve mode with Ernest as Reflector provides a rare insight into Ernest’s feelings, and for the most part, we are only given reports of his reactions and his external appearance e.g.,

Ernest looked completely blank...(p.76)

Ernest frowned. He pressed his lips tight together...
smiling rather grimly at his wife. (p.78)

Reports of the external elements of Ernest's behaviour allow the reader to infer his feelings only as they are interpreted by Rosalind, which may have the effect of rendering him unsympathetic, even as rather cruel, especially after he has 'killed' Lapinova. The information that he 'sat down and read the newspaper' is contrasted with Rosalind's terror, making it feel as if Ernest has really 'strangled' Lapinova, and portraying him as cruel and heartless. Ernest remains distant and objectified, due to the fact that the reader has little information about his thoughts and feelings.

Alternatively, Rosalind's detachment from unreality and her apparent unreliability may be factors which reduce sympathy for her.

4. 3 Feminist Codes: Marriage as 'Trap'

I have argued that the narrative structure of the story is a combination of B (N) and B(R) modes with Rosalind as principal Reflector, her point of view being prior. The denial of Rosalind's desires and her powerlessness to achieve her aims can be read as a common theme of 'marriage as trap', which is responsible for her retreat into fantasy. This theme emerges as a result of the access into Rosalind's thoughts which detail her difficulties in coming to terms with her married role, and reinforced by the use of negative modality, as in the following example;

Perhaps she would never get used to the fact that she was Mrs. Ernest
Anybody, she thought. (p.69)

In addition, the narrative implies a lack of choice on Rosalind's part e.g.,

Ernest was a difficult name to get used to. It was not the name she would
have chosen. She would have preferred Timothy, Antony or Peter.
(p.69)

Reading this as an illustration of her lack of freedom entails that other phrases take on a sinister reading, for example,

she had to explain, when he caught her looking at him, why she laughed.
(p.70)

Here a sense of obligation is implied ('she had to') and reinforces the sense of her lack of freedom through the use of the verb 'caught' in 'he caught her'. The importance of the rabbit theme takes on an additional meaning. Rosalind's perception of Ernest as a rabbit diminishes his power, due to the association of rabbits with timidity, but also implies a contrast between the mutual freedom of the fantasy world and reality. Just as rabbit can become trapped, so women can become trapped in marriage. The necessity of marriage for women is combined with the 'inevitability' of a loss of identity. This is evident also in the 'double vision' discussed above, and the contrast between the way things 'appear' and the way they are 'really'. In her wedding dress, Rosalind 'seems' 'as insoluble as an icicle'; inside, however, she is 'being melted; dispersed; dissolved into nothingness' (p.74). The importance of the fantasy is thus explained as an escape from the inevitability of her real situation.

A vision of her mother-in-law's dining room came before her; and there they sat, she and Ernest, grown old, under the engravings, in front of the sideboard...It was their golden-wedding day. She could not bear it.
(p.76)

Rosalind's dawning realisation that she has been mistaken in her perception of Ernest is followed by images of imprisonment as she feels her own house 'closing in' on her.

The rooms also seemed to have shrunk. Large pieces of furniture jutted out at odd angles and she found herself knocking against them.
(p.77)

Similarly, the heavy and solid furnishings associated with the wealth of the Thorburns produce a sense of oppression and symbolise Rosalind's married life e.g.

every room she passed seemed to be a dining-room where people sat eating under steel engravings, with thick yellow curtains and mahogany sideboards
(p.77).

Rosalind thus comes to realise the similarity between her own existence and that of other women, including her mother in law, who also has little to be happy about. As noted above, Rosalind realises that her mother-in-law's outward appearance as a 'coarse bully' is in fact a facade, and suggests that Rosalind is not the only married woman who must delude herself in order to survive.

she saw behind her the decayed family mansion, the plaster peeling off the walls, and heard her, with a sob in her voice, giving thanks to her children (who hated her) for a world that had ceased to exist. (p.75)

However, if marriage is a trap, then being single is not an enviable existence, as is evident in Rosalind's perception of her sister in law, Celia's, 'ferret-like' role;

Slung round men's shoulders, in a net, and thrust down a hole - it was a pitiable life - Celia's; it was none of her fault. So she saw Celia. (p.75)

There is again a contrast between external perceptions and inner reality.

Rosalind's perception of Celia as a ferret is based on her status as a single woman. Just as ferrets prey on rabbits, so single women 'prey' on other women's husband's, or, in a less sinister reading, are in competition for eligible men. Rosalind's external perception of Celia changes however, and she realises that it is not Celia's 'fault'; she has a 'pitiable' life, is also at the mercy of male power, and is also trapped ('thrust down a hole'). It can be seen therefore that the combination of internal views via B (R) mode and the external perspectives provided by the B (N) modes can be an effective way of problematizing the way in which marriage is perceived. Outwardly, marriage is viewed as desirable, and single women are a threat because they can compete for eligible men. However, the internal perspective implies that all women are victims of male power, and that marriage may be preferable to being single but does not entail 'happiness' for women. Read in this way, the external/internal distinction reinforces the code between the implied (feminist) author and implied

(feminist) reader who are assumed to be able to differentiate between the perception of marriage in romantic terms and the effect of marriage as institution, a recurring feminist theme.

Reading the story in accordance with the 'marriage as trap' theme entails that women are powerless 'victims' of male power. Such a reading is supported by the fact that even in his rabbit identity Ernest is 'a hunting rabbit; a King Rabbit; a rabbit that makes laws for all the other rabbits' (p.70), and his power is evident in his ability to decide Rosalind's fate; to 'kill off' Lapinova. Rosalind's perception of Ernest as rabbit-like may be seen as her attempt to diminish his power over her, if only in her imagination; in their fantasy world, she is also a ruler, Queen Lapinova. In addition, the fantasy world represents an attractive outdoor world of woods and moors, streams and blue skies, where Rosalind can 'range' by moonlight (pp.72, 94), in pleasant contrast to the mahogany sideboards and dining rooms where Rosalind is inactive, mostly confined to quiet, 'ladylike', activities such as sewing (p.75), and a world where she resembles the stuffed hare she sees in the museum (p.77).

4. 4 Conclusion

I have argued that the implied reader of Lappin and Lapinova is able to recognise a familiar dichotomy between the romantic view of marriage as desirable for women entailing security, and a feminist view of marriage as an inevitable loss of freedom and identity. The implied reader also recognises that the theme of the story arises partly as a result of Rosalind's (and to a lesser extent, Ernest's) characterisation, evoking a person schema which relates to a particular type of wife, a product of her time and class, and inevitably associated with powerlessness.

The above reading has attempted to integrate feminist codes with the mode of narration to show how Rosalind's point of view can be used to support a feminist

reading. The oscillation between the B (R) + ve and B (R) – ve modes illustrates the unreliability of Rosalind's viewpoint. Her perception of Ernest's rabbit-like qualities and nose-twitching activities is based on his external appearance, which apparently varies. The double perspective noted above in connection with the external view of marriage as a desirable institution, and the reality of married life for Rosalind is continued in her alternating views of Ernest at different times. Whether the variation in his appearance is due to some aspect of Ernest himself or is a result of Rosalind's (faulty) perception is an aspect which is potentially influential on readers' responses. The fact that Rosalind's viewpoint is only interspersed with the B (N) Neutral form of narration, which neither confirms nor refutes her perceptions, means that the reader must judge Rosalind's reliability for her or himself. Since Rosalind's perception of Ernest's rabbit-ness is not perceived by any one else, including Ernest, her view of him becomes a major element in producing a feminist reading. Rosalind has to delude herself about the circumstances of her marriage in order to survive. Her eventual 'death' is also predicted by the feminist theme. However, there are other aspects which I have not detailed which could be included in a feminist reading; the implied male violence in the association of Ernest with the gun shot, Rosalind's perception of being 'strangled' and her 'trembling' (p.78) to name only a few. However, it is unlikely that readers will be able to provide such a detailed analysis during their reading of the story, and I anticipate that feminist readings will be produced along the lines of the 'marriage as trap' or 'prison' themes described above. Being able to distinguish such a feminist reading is not unproblematic however, and does not necessarily result in sympathy for Rosalind. The dated-ness of the story may predispose a reader to disassociate her or himself from the story, to feel that times have changed, or to think 'not again!' on (re)discovering such familiar themes. These

issues and the potential effect on response may result in a resisting reading, and Rosalind's point of view can be resisted as a result of her failure to help herself. It is possible to recuperate Ernest's viewpoint and to feel sympathy for him as a result of Rosalind's rather odd insistence on remaining in a fantasy world occupied by rabbits. In addition, the oscillation between positive and negative modality and her lack of certainty about Ernest renders her point of view unreliable, and may be an additional factor in causing some readers to resist her perspective. The way in which readers respond to Rosalind's (and Ernest's) point of view and references to feminist codes will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five Preliminary Study: Readers' Responses to Woolf's *Lappin and Lapinova*

5. 1 Introduction: Aims of the Study

The preliminary study described in this chapter was intended to investigate empirically the way in which readers respond to fictional point of view. The story used for this purpose is Woolf's *Lappin and Lapinova*, an analysis of which is provided in Chapter Four. Initially, it was intended to conduct this as a pilot study which would form the basis of a larger study into readers' responses to point of view. However, I encountered some difficulties in the process of conducting the research which were a result of using *Lappin and Lapinova*, as will be discussed below. Consequently, the decision was made to discontinue using the Woolf story in favour of a more modern Atwood text. The difficulties I experienced and the reasons for my decisions are discussed below, and are summarised in section 5.12. Since the theme of *Lappin and Lapinova* is essentially a male/female relationship, I assumed that all readers would be able to relate to the events of the story and/or to the characters. As noted, the story is an example of third-person narration through a Reflector, providing an internal perspective into Rosalind's thoughts which, according to predominant theories of point of view, should induce readers to feel sympathetic towards her. However, the Reflector's perception of events may be seen to be unreliable, due to her confusion and uncertainty, which may have the potential to distance some readers. In addition, the survey of empirical research into reading suggests that factors such as reminders of personal experiences, knowledge of the genre and feminist 'codes' also have an effect on the way that we respond to fictional characters. In discussing the responses of the participants in the preliminary study therefore I will consider the following questions:-

a) How does the participant's response compare with the role of implied reader assumed by the address of the text? The data obtained for the purposes of the preliminary study often involves participants re-telling the story according to those aspects which they consider important in terms of plot structure, character evaluation and cause-effect relationships, as will be discussed below. The effect of the internal perspective should be measurable in the reader's response, since it is possible to analyse the participants' comments just as we analyse other texts. I will therefore consider the responses in relation to Simpson's narrative framework, which will allow me to consider the degree of insight into the characters' thoughts and feelings apparent in the comments. For example, those participants who are sympathetic to Rosalind are predicted to use information obtained via the internal perspective to explain her feelings about her marriage, the fantasy world and Ernest's family. This will entail re-telling the story in a form of 'narration' which corresponds to the original, namely B (R) + ve mode. Those participants who resist Rosalind's point of view can be expected to make little or no reference to her feelings, referring instead to her behaviour, and re-telling the story in a form which corresponds to the more distanced B (N) mode. These differences can be related to the readers' assumption of the role of 'actor' or 'observer' respectively to which I referred in Chapter Two. By using Simpson's categorisation, responses can be also be considered in relation to the *degree* of sympathy apparent in the responses i.e., in the form of modality expressed by the participants, and which may indicate responses which correspond to the distinctions between empathy, sympathy, and understanding discussed in Chapter Two.

b) To what extent does the participant refer to feminist 'codes' or genres?

Although information about the author's identity was not provided until the end of the

questionnaire, the style and nature of writing in the story is probably sufficient for some readers to recognise the codes that I have identified in Chapter Five, and to view this as a 'feminist' text (even if they did not read the questionnaire to the end before completion).

c) To what extent is the participant able to relate the story to personal experience? The ability to draw on real life experience is an aspect which is linked to the notion of address and empathy noted in a) above. I will consider the effects of literary training and/or personal experience, since it is likely that the ability to draw from either or both dimensions will affect responses.

d) How does the reader attribute blame? A sympathetic response to Rosalind, for example, should be combined with a causal attribution which places blame either on Ernest or on the situation. In addition, readers who have no strong opinions about the characters can be expected to adopt a more 'neutral' stance in their re-telling.

These questions mask complex and multiple combinations of factors of course, not least such obvious considerations as age, class, race, and sexual orientation. The participants were not a homogenous group, as will be discussed in section 5.3 below.

5. 2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire included a number of questions capable of producing open-ended answers. The nature of the study suggested a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach, since allowing participants the freedom to write explanations for the reasons for their responses had the advantage of a) not constraining them to my own interpretation of what is relevant and b) allowing them to answer in their own words. It seemed preferable to have a low degree of control over the responses, allowing participants to volunteer any information which *they* felt influenced their interpretation. An additional advantage of this type of open-ended answer is that it

allowed me to make a distinction between the *content* of what was said and the *form* in which it was expressed, and the language used by participants to talk about the characters has become a crucial aspect of the study.

The questionnaire used in this study is the result of testing various different versions with the Questionnaire Design Group at Lancaster University and also with some of the first participants. The version of the questionnaire which was used by the majority of the participants in the preliminary study (Appendix 2) was subsequently refined for the purposes of the main study, and included a 'sympathy scale' which allowed readers to indicate varying degrees of sympathy for the characters, and to state whether they felt the author was male or female (Appendix 3). This is the only major difference between the two versions, and is mentioned here since it was also used by four of the participants in the preliminary study. Unless otherwise stated, references to the questionnaire relate to the version included in Appendix 2.

The first page of the questionnaire asked participants to provide background information which allowed me to produce a profile consisting of such general information as sex, age group, level of education and reading habits. The second section asked participants to read *Lappin and Lapinova*. At this stage they were not told that the story was by Woolf in case this influenced their reading, although there was no way of avoiding the possibility that they might read through the questionnaire first. Space was provided between each question for readers to provide explanations of their answers. Readers were asked to describe the events of the story, and whether or not they had enjoyed it, with explanations of their response (Questions 1 and 2). This was an attempt to assess the relationship between enjoyment and response to the characters. On the version of the questionnaire on which most participants answered, readers were asked whether they felt sympathy for Ernest, Rosalind, both or neither

(Question 3). The word ‘sympathy’ was chosen after some thought: ‘identification’ was considered as an alternative term (i.e., ‘with which character do you most identify’), but was rejected, since it is possible to sympathise with a character even if a reader cannot actually identify with him or her. The reverse of this is that it may be possible to identify with a character yet still feel little or no sympathy for him or her. Participants were also asked which character they felt the author had most sympathy for, in an attempt to discover whether readers discerned any relationship between internal perspective and assumptions of sympathy (Question 4). Question 5 asked readers for their perception of the cause of the problems between the characters, in an attempt to assess the relationship between sympathy and causal attributions. Finally, participants were asked questions about their familiarity with Woolf’s writing (Questions 6 to 9).

In the process of completing the task, participants were asked to underline in red any parts of the story which might explain the feelings of sympathy that they had expressed, and to underline in blue any parts which helped to explain their answer about the author’s sympathy. This was intended to help me to discover whether specific parts of the story were responsible for eliciting expressions of sympathy, especially those associated with shifts in perspective, and whether the same examples were used to support differing responses. I anticipated that those shifts in perspective noted in Chapter Four would be those most likely to appear in readers’ interpretations, increasing or decreasing sympathy depending on which character they responded to most positively. The underlining task did not turn out to be as important for the purposes of my analysis as anticipated, since participants automatically referred to specific incidents in the story to illustrate the points they were making. The task was retained in the comparative study described in Chapter Seven, however, since

some of the readers claimed that the task was helpful in enabling them to clarify their responses. Finally, participants were asked to state whether they would be willing to be interviewed at a later stage (Q.10). This was to allow them to elaborate on or to clarify any points mentioned, and for me to assess the usefulness of the questionnaire. Full transcripts of participants' questionnaire and interview responses are included in Appendix 4, and are referred to by line numbers in the following discussion.

Participant comments are italicised throughout in order to distinguish them from fictional extracts. Paraphrases of their comments are enclosed in quotation marks.

5. 3 Participants

Questionnaires were initially distributed to a group of approximately twenty mature students of G.C.S.E. literature at Preston College in an attempt to compare male and female responses from people with a similar level of literary training. All of the participants in the study have been coded alphabetically, and marked with 'm' or 'f' to indicate the sex of the reader; Participant Ef, for example, is a female student from this group. Although all of the questionnaires were returned by this first group of participants, an unpredicted problem was the underinformative nature of some of the responses, due to the participants' opinion that the story was difficult to understand. Most of these questionnaires were incomplete and only five were deemed to be sufficiently informative for the purposes of the study. It is worth noting however that some of the difficulties experienced by these readers can be related to the way in which Rosalind's point of view is presented. As noted in Chapter Five, the narration via B (R) - ve mode at times indicates Rosalind's uncertainty and confusion, and can give rise to an impression of unreliability, an aspect which is apparent in the response of one reader from this group. Below is his comment on being asked to explain the cause of Ernest's and Rosalind's problems.

A large jar labelled 'Drugs'. Severe hallucinogenics inside. Rosalind is a schizophrenic, with little relation to her surrounding world.

(Participant Xm, emphasis in original)

Although extreme, this comment reflects the way in which the mode of narration indicates Rosalind's confusion, and renders her unreliable, explained here in terms of hallucinogenic drugs. In addition, his reference to schizophrenia can be seen to be a direct result of the portrayal of the two worlds which Rosalind inhabits, her fantasy world and the real world. This reader claimed that the story was 'very difficult to follow' (l. 4) and declined to participate further, and it is apparent that the original mode of narration is effective in creating a sense of disorientation, in this case, resulting in the reader's disillusionment and lack of interest (l.4). His response also illustrates the potential for an internal perspective to lead to resistance, as is apparent in the way in which Participant Xm attributes blame (indirectly) to Rosalind, due to her dislocation from reality (*'little relation to her surrounding world'*).

The problems experienced by some of the students in this group arose from the perceived difficulty of Woolf's style. In an attempt to overcome this, questionnaires were subsequently distributed via pigeonholes to postgraduate students in both the English and the Women's Studies departments at Lancaster University, with a note explaining that participation was voluntary. Friends also took part in the study, and, in addition, questionnaires and pre-paid envelopes with an explanatory note were left in the Harris public library in Preston, inviting volunteers to take part in a study of reading. Those participants who did complete the questionnaire had the opportunity of remaining anonymous, and did not need to take any further part in the study unless they so desired. At this stage, I also produced a re-written version of the story in which I changed the roles of the characters, making Ernest the one who fantasised and Rosalind the one who ended it, and issued this with a further questionnaire. This

experiment was deemed to be too flawed to be continued, but will be mentioned in section 5.7 below in connection with resisting readings.

The return rate of the questionnaires from the Lancaster students and the public library was disappointingly low. In all, out of approximately eighty questionnaires which had been issued, nineteen eventually formed the basis of the preliminary study, ten female and nine male participants (See Appendix 4) for participant profiles). Four questionnaires relating to the re-written version were also completed, and one participant was interviewed; these responses will be considered in section 5.7. Eight people who indicated a willingness to participate further were subsequently interviewed.

5. 4 Interview Questions

The participants were first asked if they objected to being tape-recorded (Question one, see Appendix Five). I then informed them that I had omitted the question about marital status from the questionnaire and asked them if they would provide this information (Question two). This was sometimes problematic at the interview stage, since it was perceived by some of the participants as having special significance, and they questioned my reasons for needing the information. Since I could not inform them at this stage in case it affected their responses, I had to defer informing them until the de-briefing session. Although none of the participants declined to answer, a relatively unproblematic question gained extra significance as a result.

Participants were given the opportunity to re-read the story if required (Question three) and to mark anything in the text which elicited reminders. Question four asked about their feelings at the end of the story, and question five about their perception of its realism. These questions are related to point of view, since the

response to Rosalind's viewpoint is reflected in reactions to the end of the story. It was also expected to elicit information about the persistence of the 'personality' traits which readers perceived. The degree of realism is also a factor, and was expected to elicit information about Rosalind's perceived fate. Question six asked for information about passages which evoked reminders. Participants were also provided with a number of differing interpretations of the story, and descriptions of the characters, and were asked to indicate how far they agreed with these (Questions seven to eleven), an exercise which was subsequently dropped from the main study as being time-consuming and uninformative; contributions were more valuable when readers discussed their own interpretations. Participants were invited to make further comments about the story or the task itself (Questions twelve and thirteen), before being informed of the purpose of the research and invited to ask questions. At this stage, participants usually commented on their degree of familiarity with Woolf and initiated further discussion about writing, writers, the story, and the task.

It was anticipated that the majority of readers should respond more sympathetically to Rosalind than to Ernest, since she is the main Reflector. The questionnaire also allowed readers to express sympathy for Ernest, for both characters, or for neither character. The participants' questionnaire responses were subsequently coded as follows;

- 'Response 1' or 'R1' = Sympathy for Rosalind
- 'Response 2' or 'R2' = Sympathy for Ernest
- 'Response 3' or 'R3' = Sympathy for Both
- 'Response 4' or 'R4' = Sympathy for Neither

'R1' readers are therefore the most predictable; the numbering of the remaining responses reflects the ordering of the boxes on the questionnaire, rather

than any hierarchical sequencing. Participants' questionnaire and interview transcripts are included in Appendix 6.⁵

5. 5 Results

In answer to the question concerning participants' sympathies, eleven participants out of nineteen *did* express most sympathy for Rosalind. Included in this number are the three participants who answered on the later format of the questionnaire according to the 'sympathy scale' (Appendix 3, Participants Nm, Of and Rm). Their responses have been coded as being 'sympathetic to Rosalind', since two claimed to be 'fairly sympathetic' to her while expressing 'no opinion' and 'fairly unsympathetic' responses to Ernest. Participant Nm claimed to be 'very sympathetic' to Rosalind and 'totally unsympathetic' to Ernest. Using two different questionnaire formats therefore created some problems for the analysis of these results; however, it is reasonable to assume that these participants would have expressed most sympathy for Rosalind if they had been presented with the same choice as the other participants, and it is unlikely that they would have expressed sympathy for both characters, given their unsympathetic responses to Ernest. This group of eleven readers will henceforth be referred to as 'R1' readers.

Two participants expressed sympathy for Ernest ('R2' readers - Participants Lf and Tf), two had sympathy for both characters ('R3' readers - Participants Sf and Am), and two expressed sympathy for neither ('R4' readers - Participants Um and Bf). In addition, one participant created her own box and expressed sympathy for 'Lapinova' (Participant Pf). Although her response will be considered, and can be

⁵ At the beginning of this research, I attempted to transcribe the interviews in detail, noting speaker turns etc. This proved time-consuming however, and was not necessary for my purpose, which was to analyse the content of what was said, rather than the conversational 'pattern'. This is the reason why the format of the transcripts is not consistent. Similarly, my decision to use the term 'participants' in favour of 'respondents' means that the participants are sometimes denoted as 'P' in the transcripts, and sometimes as 'R'.

related to those of the ‘R1 readers’, her answer is unique, and her explanation insufficiently detailed to justify creating an additional category (see Table 1).

Table 1: Participants’ Responses to Characters in *Lappin and Lapinova*

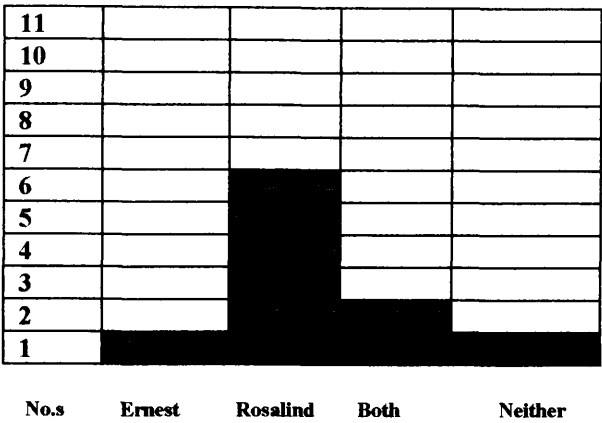
11					
10					
9					
8					
7					
6					
5					
4					
3					
2					
1					
Nos.	Rosalind (R1)	Ernest (R2)	Both (R3)	Neither (R4)	Lapinova

As expected, the table indicates that there is a tendency for readers to sympathise most with Rosalind, although the fact that three participants expressed more sympathy for Ernest is surprising given the limited access to his point of view. Before discussing the results in detail, it is useful to divide the responses into male and female participants to discover the effect of sex differences on response. Tables 2 and 3 below show male and female responses separately.

Table 2: Female Participants’ Expressions of Sympathy for Characters in *Lappin and Lapinova*

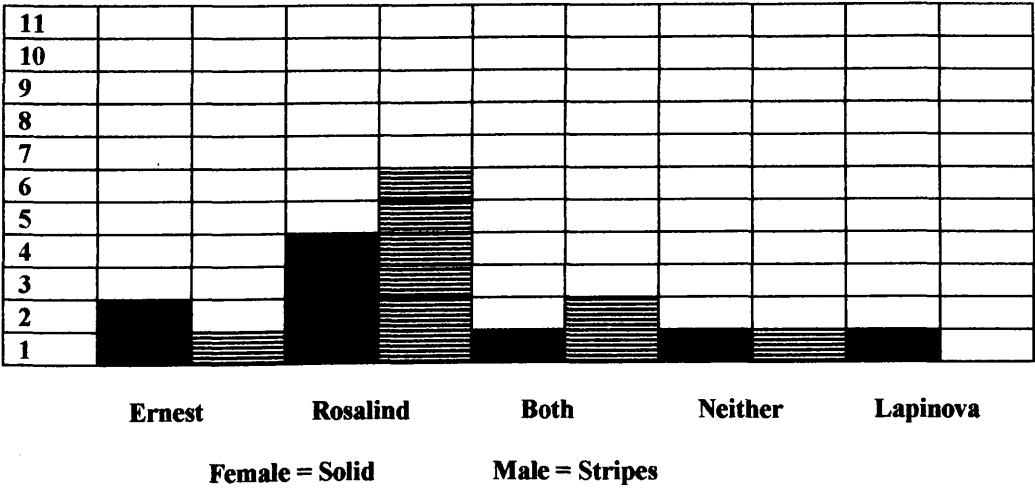
11					
10					
9					
8					
7					
6					
5					
4					
3					
2					
1					
No.s	Ernest	Rosalind	Both	Neither	Lapinova

Table 3: Male Participants’ Expressions of Sympathy for Characters in *Lappin and Lapinova*



Although the numbers are small, and despite the fact that there is one more male participant than there are female participants, the pattern of response suggests that the men may be more inclined to award sympathy to Rosalind. Although this tendency is present in the responses of the women also, their responses are more evenly distributed among the choices offered to them. Table 4 below shows the comparison between female and male responses.

Table 4: Comparison of Female and Male Participants’ Expressions of Sympathy for characters in *Lappin and Lapinova*



On the whole, the men appear to be slightly more sympathetic to Rosalind or to both characters, whereas the women are more evenly divided between the two. Before continuing however, it is useful to consider these results in accordance with the way in which the participants respond to the question concerning author sympathy. Eleven of the participants claimed that Rosalind’s was the privileged point of view, as might be expected; however, five felt that the author had sympathy for neither character (see Table 5).

Table 5: Participants’ Perceptions of Author Sympathy in *Lappin and Lapinova*

11					
10					
9					
8					
7					
6					
5					
4					
3					
2					
1					
Nos.	Ernest	Rosalind	Both	Neither	Lapinova

In addition, six of the participants who expressed the opinion that Rosalind was the character for whom the author had sympathy, also claimed that they too had more sympathy for her. The discussion of the concepts of implied author and implied reader in Chapter Two noted that this relationship is based on an assumption that views, attitudes and values are similar between the two. In addition, included in the reader’s perception of the implied author is the reader’s impression of the author’s attitude towards the characters. I was concerned that this could be a factor in influencing participants, i.e., that awareness of what is *expected* may affect actual

responses. Such a relationship would result in a convenient symmetry between the implied author's presumed intention and the reader's response. With regard to the six participants who conform to this pattern, I wanted to clarify whether these readers are responding sympathetically *because* Rosalind's is the privileged point of view, or whether their sympathetic response is the reason for their claim that the author is most sympathetic to Rosalind. Their responses will be discussed in detail in section 5.6 below.

By contrast, two of the participants recognised that Rosalind's point of view is the one privileged by the author and yet expressed sympathy for both characters. This may be a result of the limited insight into Ernest's thoughts, which allows readers to see two 'sides' to the story. Less predictable are the responses of two of the female participants who recognised that Rosalind's point of view is privileged, yet expressed more sympathy for Ernest. These responses are however explicable in relation to theories of resisting reading discussed in Chapter Two. Even more unpredictable is the perception that the author has sympathy for neither character. Four readers, of whom three are female, expressed this opinion while claiming to have more sympathy for Rosalind. A further participant, also female, felt that the author had sympathy for neither character, and claimed that she also felt sympathy for neither character.

The extent to which some participants may provide the answer which theories of point of view anticipate may have the potential to distort the results obtained from the questionnaires, and will be considered in my discussion of the responses of the R1 readers in section 5. 6. I will subsequently discuss the R2, R3 and R4 readers in turn, before considering the different tendencies apparent in the responses of female and male participants in section 5. 8. In section 5. 9 I will report the experiment into resisting readings, before turning to the relationship between response and causal

attributions in section 5. 10. I will also explain my reasons for abandoning the attributional framework from the analysis, in favour of a framework relating to the notion of a relationship schema, and I will exemplify this in section 5. 11 with the readers' responses. Finally I will outline the primary findings from the preliminary study and the areas of concern for the comparative study to be reported in Chapter Seven.

5. 6 'R 1 Readers': Relationship between Perception of Author's Sympathy and Response.

The R1 readers consist of a group of eleven participants who claimed to have most sympathy for Rosalind, namely Participants Cf, Ef, Fm, Gf, Hm, Im, Mm, Nm, Of, Rm and Vf. Six of these R1 readers also claimed that the author has most sympathy for Rosalind, namely, Participants Fm, Im, Mm, Nm, Rm, and Vf. (Throughout the early part of this discussion I will be using the term 'sympathy' rather loosely, but will distinguish among readers according to their varying degrees of sympathy in section 5.6 (ii) below.) I was concerned that this perception may be affecting their responses, i.e., that their awareness that Rosalind's point of view is privileged, and their knowledge of the author's identity, (some had read this information before answering), may cause them to assume that Rosalind is the character for whom they were *expected* to express sympathy. The responses of some of the participants seem to confirm this, and they refer to point of view aspects to explain their responses. The following examples illustrate this apparent tendency and are in answer to the question about the author's sympathy (Q. 4).

the story is told mainly from Rosalind's point of view
(Participant Mm, l.15)

Much of the passage is seen through the eyes of Rosalind and we are directed toward sympathy with her
(Participant Nm, ls. 25-26)
she is the focus of attention

(Participant Rm, l.15)
(Rosalind) is the main subject matter of the piece.
She is the only character we are given an insight into
 (Participant Vf, ls.6-7, also l. 9)

Their sympathetic responses on the questionnaire are thus partly affected by their awareness that Rosalind's point of view is primary. Similarly, the presentation of Ernest is used to support this perception, e.g.;

Toward the end of the story (Ernest) appears cold and insensitive
 (Participant Mm, ls. 12-13)
Ernest's character and behaviour are presented in a detached casual unsympathetic sort of way (Participant Nm, ls.12-13).
He only exists as the object of Rosalind's thoughts. He is rarely is ever the agent of action but behaves almost automatically or by reaction.
 (Participant Rm, ls. 7-8)

These comments are clearly related to point of view matters, since the perception of Ernest as 'insensitive' depends upon 'seeing' him from Rosalind's perspective.

The responses of Participants Fm and Im are slightly different however, since their expressions of sympathy for Rosalind apparently arise as a result of their perception of a 'Rosalind as victim' theme. As a result, Rosalind is seen as 'alone' and powerless in the midst of Ernest's powerful family. Since victimisation is a concept which is morally wrong, these readers conclude that Rosalind's portrayal as victim is an intentional device which will render her sympathetic e.g.,

The author presents her as the unfortunate victim who is last to lose her illusions of life.(Participant Fm, ls. 8-9)
Rosalind is presented as the orphan taken up into a big family, the victim of middle-class thoughtlessness (Participant Fm, ls 10-11)
One sympathises with anyone who is an orphan (Participant Im, l.7)

In the latter case, this perception is again contrasted with Ernest's presentation.

Most references to Ernest are negative, for by the end he appears to be a thoroughly bad lot. (Participant Im, ls. 11-12)

The 'Rosalind as victim' theme is therefore a factor in persuading these two participants that her presentation is expected to evoke sympathy for her, and is also apparent in Mm's comment e.g.,

Rosalind is seen to be sensitive, alone, and pitted against Ernest's family.
(Participant Mm, l. 12)

These responses therefore suggest that the readers perceive the presentation of events from Rosalind's point of view, and her presentation as a 'victim', combined with the 'negative' presentation of Ernest, as an attempt by the implied author to induce the reader to be sympathetic towards Rosalind. The discussion is thus in danger of becoming circular, in that the readers' recognition of the link between internal point of view and their expected response encourages them to respond in the way the theory anticipates.

However, this cannot be true in all cases, since the remaining five R1 readers express sympathy for Rosalind while perceiving the author's sympathy differently. Four of the remaining R1 readers claimed that the author had sympathy for neither character, namely Participants Cf, Ef, Hm and Of (although Participant Ef changed her mind at the interview stage, and claimed that the author had more sympathy for Rosalind); Participant Gf failed to answer the question. It becomes apparent that the mode of narration is responsible for these latter responses; the perception that Rosalind's point of view is privileged is combined with the perception that the author is sympathetic to neither character, and is consistent with the B (N) Neutral mode of narration which frames Rosalind's perspective, for example;

The author tells the story from the eyes of Rosalind, but I don't feel that the author particularly sympathises. (Participant Ef, ls. 7-8)
Can't tell - so much of Rosalind in the story, yet there might be much sympathy elsewhere, if explored. (Participant Gf, ls. 9-10)
The author just tells the tale and leaves it to the reader who to sympathise with. (Participant Hm, ls. 16-17)

As Simpson notes, the B (N) Neutral form of narration is the most impersonal form (Simpson, 1993:67), and the apparent neutrality of the framing narration results in the perception of these participants that the author is objective about the characters. A similar comment is found in the response of Participant Pf, who expressed sympathy for 'Lapinova', e.g. *'I feel the style and attitude is non-committal'*. The fact that the majority of these participants are women and that the latter group are mainly men is, I feel, merely coincidental. However the majority of participants who comprise this group are those who do not claim to have literary training, which might be a factor in their responses. It cannot be the only factor, since Participant Of, a teacher with a literature degree, also responded in this way. Her comments are based on the fact that the *author 'illustrates that the couple are not suited to each other'* (l.21), and shows the *'frailties of both characters'* (ls.22). The fact that Rosalind's point of view does not take priority in her interpretation suggests that she also perceives the implied author to be neutral about the characters. The combination of an unreliable, confused Reflector, limited insight into Ernest's thoughts, and a neutral external narration, may serve to indicate disinterest on the part of the author, a perception which is also apparent in Participant Nm's comment that Ernest is presented in a *'detached casual unsympathetic sort of way'*. While the latter responses suggest that the reader's sympathies are not necessarily affected by their perception of the author's sympathies, they also illustrate the way in which the reader builds up an impression of the implied author from the way in which the story is presented.

The influence of point of view on the responses of the participants is therefore more complex than might be assumed from the way they answer the questions on the questionnaire. They differ in their perception of the way in which the story is told, suggesting that their own response partly affects their opinion of the implied author

rather than the mode of narration directly influencing response. By discussing the R1 readers' language use in connection with Simpson's narrative framework and the way in which they make causal attributions, it is possible to form a clearer picture of their attitudes.

Participants Cf, Ef, Fm, Hm, and Im were interviewed and their responses form the major part of this discussion. The questionnaire responses of Participants Gf, Mm, Nm, Of, and Vf are used to support points made. In the following discussion, it is possible to make a distinction between 'explicit' sympathy, the response made by participants to Question four and 'implicit' sympathy, the way in which the language used to talk about the characters betrays varying degrees of closeness to/distance from either or both.

5. 7 Narrative Re-tellings

Application of Simpson's framework to the transcripts allows me to be systematic in my analysis of the responses and to treat them as if they are fictional narratives. This is appropriate, since the participants are often re-telling the story using those elements which they consider significant in arriving at their interpretation. Simpson's framework is also useful since it allows me to make a distinction between those 'narratives' which suggest some access to the characters' inner thoughts and feelings, and those which exhibit a degree of distance or alienation. Obviously, the transcripts all fall into the Category B third person mode. However, the tendency for some participants to display varying degrees of insight into the consciousness of characters may be discussed in relation to the variable distance allowed by the different types of narratorial modality.

To summarise the discussion in Chapter Three, Simpson's 'positive' shading refers to the foregrounding of the narrator's modality, in particular the deontic and

boulomaic systems. This is an especially useful way of distinguishing between the participants, since their attitudes towards the characters are often expressed in terms of approval or disapproval, and can be related to the deontic system, the obligations of Rosalind and Ernest towards each other and the responsibilities occasioned by marriage. I predicted that such aspects would be linked to causal attributions, with participants apportioning blame according to which character they perceive to be most responsible for the events of the story. Although this prediction is confirmed to some extent, it is more accurate to say that the participants attribute blame to the character who is perceived to be failing to make an effort in the relationship. This is not necessarily the same as being responsible for the events of the story, as will be discussed in section 5. 10. The form of the re-tellings illustrates both the degree of insight into the character's thoughts and feelings, and their motives, which are linked to the attribution of cause and effect. In addition, one of the characteristics of the B (N) + ve mode is the use of generics, and the way in which the participants transform Rosalind's experience into universal 'truths' reveals a different type of response between women and men, as will be discussed in section 5. 8.

The 'negative' shading of the B (N) - ve mode is a result of the effect of 'words of estrangement' and the highlighting of opinions based on perception. This typifies the remarks of some of the participants whose distance from the viewpoints of one or other of the characters is manifested in their use of such words, their degree of commitment to their propositions as shown in their use of epistemic modality and perception adverbs, and their expressed frustration at withheld information. One obvious point to note about the epistemic modality exhibited by the participants is that some readers may simply be cautious about expressing strong commitment due to their awareness that any interpretation may be subject to criticism or seen as

‘incorrect’. Even so, the way in which participants express their (lack of) certainty in their comments about the characters can be used as a measure of their response towards them, indicating that they are more certain about one than the other.

Some of the responses may be compared with Simpson’s ‘Category B in Reflector mode’, with some readers referring directly to the feelings of the characters, thereby adopting the perspective of either Rosalind or Ernest i.e., the role of ‘actor’ in the events. However, even those whose language use employs the more distanced B (N) mode of narration may be analysed according to whether their narrative ‘shading’ may be termed ‘positive’, ‘negative’ or ‘neutral’. Analysis of the participants’ re-tellings in this way allows me therefore to do three things:

- 1. assess the degree of insight into the characters’ thought processes through their use of B (R) mode;
- 2. compare the mode of re-telling with the original text and with the re-tellings of other participants;
- 3. locate the perceived cause/effect relationship in the Participants’ attribution of blame apparent in their use of B (N) + ve mode.

To illustrate this I will return to the comment of Participant Xm, whose perception of Rosalind’s unreliability was, he claimed, a result of schizophrenia or hallucinogenic drugs. Participant Xm’s (jocular) interpretation of the relationship problems between Rosalind and Ernest is ‘narrated’ in B (N) + ve mode, locating the cause in Rosalind; i.e., a cause/effect relationship which blames Rosalind for taking hallucinogenic drugs which render her unable to relate to her surrounding world. In attributional terms, this is a ‘person attribution’; he perceives the cause of the problems to be located in Rosalind herself (i.e., ‘she is a schizophrenic’). In addition, his use of the B (N) form suggests that Participant Xm assumes the role of ‘observer’ of the events of the story, judging Rosalind according to her actions rather than referring to her thoughts. Participant Xm’s comments also support Fairley’s claim that

The participants and their responses are recorded in columns 1 and 2, with ‘+ R’, for example, indicating that the participant expressed most sympathy for Rosalind. To illustrate further, Participant Am claimed to be sympathetic to both characters on the questionnaire and has therefore been recorded as ‘+ both’ in Column 2 to indicate a ‘positive’ response to both characters. The narrative mode which typifies the participants’ comments about the characters is recorded in columns 3-10, the appropriate column being marked with a bullet. Using Participant Am to illustrate further, his comments demonstrate an insight into Ernest’s thoughts evident in the use of the B (R) + ve mode in his re-telling and recorded in Column 4. His comments about Rosalind are however typified by the B (N) - ve mode demonstrating a lack of insight into her thoughts, and this is recorded in Column 9. The diagram is thus able to show that his response is relatively unusual compared with those of the other participants, but is similar to the response of Participant Fm. Participant Am’s comments also suggest that he locates blame in the person of Rosalind, recorded in Column 11 as a person attribution against her. This is the result of comments such as ‘*she just gave up trying*’ (1.319), which is, however, unsatisfactorily described in attributional terms, since it does not necessarily imply a stable disposition of Rosalind’s, an aspect which will be discussed in full in section 5. 10. The pattern of Participant Am’s response as indicated by the diagram thus allows me to suggest that despite his explicit sympathy for both characters as stated on the questionnaire, his comments suggest that he is apparently more inclined to sympathise with Ernest, and that his response is slightly different from most of the other participants. This will be considered more fully in the discussion to follow.

It should also be noted that the B (N) + ve mode can indicate either **approval** or **disapproval** of the characters, and this is evident in the fact that it is used both by

Participant Bf, who is sympathetic to neither character, and Participant Gf, who claims to be sympathetic to Rosalind. Similarly, use of the B (R) + ve form is not always an indication of sympathy for a character, since awareness of a character's thoughts can result in resistance, as is seen in the case of Participant Lf. I will first concentrate on the participants' language use before turning to the question of causal attributions. The majority of the discussion will focus on those participants who have been interviewed, since their responses are more detailed than the questionnaire responses alone. Questionnaire responses of the other participants will be referred to subsequently to support further points which emerge during the discussion.

5. 7 (i) 'R1 Readers' - Overview

Before discussing the responses in detail, I will first summarise the main points which arise from my analysis and which are linked to the initial questions posed above.

1) Function of the narrative modes in the re-tellings.

Seven of the re-tellings of the eleven R1 readers demonstrate an awareness of Rosalind's thoughts and feelings apparent in their use of the B (R) + ve mode, namely Participants Cf, Ef, Hm, Mm, Nm, Of and Vf, (recorded in Column 3, Figure 4). However, this is not always indicative of a sympathetic response, and is an aspect of the discussion which is linked to a) above, namely the way in which the reader's response can be linked to the role of the implied reader. If the insight into Rosalind's mind is an attempt to render her sympathetic, then this is not entirely successful. In addition, some of the participants also use the B (R) mode to refer to Ernest, but again, this is not always indicative of sympathy for him. The participants' use of the B (N) + ve mode is an expression of their attitudes towards the characters, their opinions and response. By contrast, the appearance of the B (N) - ve mode in the re-tellings is often

an indication of uncertainty and distance from a character's point of view, and is evident in comments about both Rosalind and Ernest. All of these aspects will be discussed below.

2) Feminist codes.

Four of the re-tellings of the R1 readers who use the B (R) mode to refer to Rosalind's feelings reflect the 'marriage as trap' theme, (Participants Cf, Mm, Nm and Vf), an aspect of the story which I argued in Chapter Five was an indication of a feminist code. This aspect of the discussion is linked to b) above, the consideration of feminist themes. Despite the appearance of this theme in the re-tellings however, it does not reflect a specifically feminist reading, but is more a reflection of the original story. The 'marriage as trap' theme is combined with a 'fantasy as escape' theme, a variation of which is apparent in the re-tellings of the remaining two R1 readers in this group (Participants Hm and Of), namely a 'marriage as mistake' theme and which is in turn combined with a 'fantasy as compensation' theme. The re-telling of the R1 reader whose response indicates the most sympathy for Rosalind, Participant Ef, reflects an alternative theme of 'marriage as security', which arises as a result of her ability to 'see' things from Rosalind's point of view. There is also the appearance of a 'woman as victim' theme (Participants Fm, Im, and Of), which again does not necessarily indicate a sympathetic response; a similar theme is apparent in the responses of 'resisting' readers to explain their lack of sympathy, as will be discussed in section 5. 6. (iii). Each of these readings will be discussed in turn

3) The Personal Resonance Factor

Two other aspects arise from my analysis of the responses which are related to c) and d) above. Firstly, it emerges that the ability to relate the text to some aspect of the reader's personal experience has a significant effect on response, an effect which,

following Seilman and Larsen, I will term the ‘personal resonance factor’. Secondly, and linked to this, is the finding that some of the women readers relate to the text on a more personal level than the men, which may be a result of the fact that the Reflector is female. The men’s ability to relate to the text, by contrast, is partly dependent on their ability to transform Rosalind’s experiences into more general terms, relating to situations with which they can identify.

4) Attribution Theory

Lastly, the issue of causal attributions raised in d) above is not as clear cut as predicted; the attributional framework is problematic in application, and although I will refer to causal attributions in section 5.8, I have subsequently decided to abandon the notion in favour of the more easily applicable notion of a relationship schema, as will be discussed in section 5.9. I will now consider each of these aspects in turn.

5. 7 (ii) ‘R1 Readers’: Discussion of Responses

In terms of the relationship between implied author and reader discussed in Chapter Two, it would be expected that the R1 readers would be those who most closely resemble the implied reader. The insight into Rosalind’s mind in the story is expected to be met with a correspondingly sympathetic response which is reflected in the participants’ use of the B (R) + ve mode in their re-tellings. Similarly, I argued that the ‘marriage as trap’ theme might be expected to appear in the re-tellings, due to its prominence in the story. However, in section 5. 6, I expressed caution in assuming that the responses of all the R1 readers are indicative of true sympathy, as a result of their awareness of the assumed link between point of view and response. Despite this, some of the responses do seem to confirm the initial predictions, and the re-tellings of the R1 readers in B (R) + ve mode often reflect the ‘marriage as trap’ theme.

Examples include the following;

she was just caught and subdued and had no thought of a life for her own herself and he was no longer willing to help her survive the situation by going into escapism (Participant Cf, ls. 30-33)

Rosalind increasingly feels trapped by her marriage.

Her only means of escape is in the imaginary world of rabbits that she constructs (Participant Mm, ls. 1-3)

The rabbit/hare imaginative life is her escape from the dullness and imprisonment of the Thorburn world in which she has placed herself. (Participant Nm, ls. 13-16)

A woman trapped by marriage and society. Desperate for some sort of life that is hers and no-one else's - her imaginary escape. (Participant Vf, ls. 1-2)

These responses reflect the theme of the original story, in which the insight into Rosalind's thoughts via the B (R) mode allows the reader to understand a) her feelings of disillusionment at becoming part of the Thorburn family and losing her identity, and b) the importance of the fantasy in enabling her to cope. The insight into Rosalind's thoughts is reflected in these re-tellings to reproduce the story from her point of view. The issue of Rosalind's powerlessness in relation to her husband, an integral part of the theme, is also apparent in some of the re-tellings. Participants Cf and Nm, for example, perceive the relationship in terms of Ernest's ability to control Rosalind. For example, Participant Cf comments that '(Ernest) *was no longer willing to help her survive the situation by going into escapism*', and Participant Nm that Rosalind is '*allowed to have*' her world only until Ernest '*tires of it and her*' (ls. 21-22). Both of these use the B (R) + ve mode to refer to Ernest's feelings, but concentrate on the effect on Rosalind, thereby mirroring the original theme of the text. My analysis in Chapter Four suggested that the characterisation of Ernest at the beginning of the story in terms of social position 'sets the stage' for the move into Rosalind's mind, and the effect of her position as his wife on Rosalind. References to Ernest's mind via B (R) + ve mode (e.g. '*he was no longer willing to help her*'), are thus used to reinforce the 'marriage as trap' theme from Rosalind's point of view, since the fantasy is the only way that Rosalind can '*survive the situation*' of being

married to a powerful man. The appearance of the ‘marriage as trap’ theme in these re-tellings is not necessarily evidence of the activation of a feminist code, but is rather a reflection of the predominant theme of the story.

Participant Cf was interviewed and her responses allow me to examine in more detail the relationship between responses and the mode of re-telling. As can be seen in the extract above, Participant Cf’s re-telling is a mixture of modes, sometimes B (R), as in the references to Ernest’s lack of ‘willingness’ (e.g., ‘*he was no longer willing to help her*’) but occasionally B (N) - ve and B (N) + ve are used to refer to Ernest (recorded in column 10, Figure 4), as can be seen in the following example;

It was as if he was just happy with the fact that he was able to (.) maybe manipulate’s too strong a word (.) but he was actually controlling her by giving her something to hold on to so that she could make sense of or cope with the situation she was in by being married to him (ls. 306-310)

The words of estrangement ‘as if’, and ‘maybe’ and adverb of factivity ‘actually’ suggest a distancing effect from Ernest which is in keeping with her comment, ‘*I had to actually look at the way I assessed him*’ (ls.339-340). In addition, Participant Cf’s re-telling illustrates the way in which she perceives Ernest’s participation in the fantasy to be a means of ‘control’, and shows that participants’ use of the B (R) + ve mode does not necessarily indicate a sympathetic response. This is confirmed by Participant Cf’s re-telling in B (N) + ve mode, which emphasises Ernest’s refusal to continue with his ‘obligations’ to Rosalind, namely to help her cope with her situation as his wife (ls. 41-47). Ernest acts in accordance with his own desires (‘*for his own benefit because it amused him*’ (l. 45), and neglects his ‘duty’ to his wife to ‘*make her life bearable*’ (l.44). In this case, the insight into Ernest’s mind inclines Participant Cf to be more sympathetic to Rosalind as a result of the effect on her of Ernest’s behaviour.

A variation on the ‘marriage as trap’ theme is found in some of the R1 readers’ responses, namely a ‘marriage as mistake’ theme, which is less evaluative, and less obviously related to Rosalind’s point of view in the original story. These include the following;

The woman is trying to find a means to make her marriage tenable for herself (l. 1).

the woman tried to find ways to accept her marriage even though, from the beginning, she instinctively knows that she has made a big mistake.

(Participant Of, (ls. 4-5)

Rosalind is aware she has married above her station and so fantasises about her and Ernest being simple rabbits (l. 1-2)

she didn’t even know what she was letting herself in for (l. 40)

Participant Hm

Both of these participants use the B R + ve mode to refer to Ernest. As with Participants Cf and Nm, the B (R) + ve mode is used by Participant Of to explain Ernest’s reasons for ending the fantasy.

Initially prepared to enter a private world but increasingly bored by it and eventually totally out of sympathy with it. (ls.7-8)

Her disapproval of his characterisation is apparent in the use of the B N + ve mode to describe him as ‘*boring*’ (ls 11 and 14) and his ‘destruction’ of the fantasy as ‘*cruel*’ (l.17) which undermines any sympathy which might be assumed by the reference to his feelings. Participant Of’s sympathy for Rosalind is increased by Ernest’s ‘cruelty’ at not continuing the fantasy, and has similarities in this respect to Participant Cf’s response; i.e., the references to Ernest’s feelings are concerned mainly with the effect of his actions on Rosalind. Use of the B (R) + ve mode thus demonstrates an insight into the characters’ minds and therefore understanding, but is not necessarily an indication of a sympathetic response.

By contrast, the use of the B R + ve mode to refer to Ernest’s feelings in Participant Hm’s account, *does* reflect an apparent ability to see events from Ernest’s point of view, and to take into account factors that make the marriage a mistake for

both characters, not just for Rosalind. In Participant Hm's re-telling, events are sometimes re-told from Ernest's point of view e.g.,

he participated in this fantasy world just to please his wife', (ls. 140-141)
(Ernest) probably got promoted at work and he just wants to carry on with his standard of life and just leave his wife to running the house'. (ls.115-119).

References to Ernest's feelings in this case do suggest an ability to recuperate Ernest's point of view and to sympathise with him, filling in his reasons for wanting to end the fantasy. Participant Hm's re-telling also includes Ernest's reasons for wanting to marry Rosalind e.g.,

she must have been (.) er like a beautiful (.) looking woman or girl or whatever you know (.) and er ... Ernest has been (.) you know (.) taken with her (ls. 174-177)

The use of the B (R) mode in Participant Hm's account therefore demonstrates an apparent ability to adopt Ernest's point of view, and differs in this respect from Participants Cf, Nm and Of. The differing orientations to Rosalind's point of view between Participants Cf and Hm are also illustrated by the way in which they discuss Rosalind's choice of rabbits as a fantasy. For example, Participant Hm notes that Rosalind appears to be relating to rabbits because, in addition to being '*cornered*' (l.230), a reference to their being 'trapped' or 'caged', consistent with the 'marriage as trap' theme, they are also a '*fluffy animal*' (l.231) and '*cuddly*' (l.232). Such a reading is in keeping with Participant Hm's opinion that Rosalind must have been '*beautiful-looking*' (ls. 175-176), suggesting her appeal to Ernest as a kind of 'pet', and is used to explain Ernest's reasons for marrying 'beneath' himself. Participant Cf also speculates on Rosalind's choice of rabbits for her fantasy, yet relates this to her perception of Rosalind's powerlessness within marriage, an aspect of her re-telling which will be discussed further below.

she was probably timid like a rabbit and that's why she related to her own pet rabbit which isn't mentioned anywhere else is it (.) so she probably

had to give up this pet rabbit when she got married (.) that's my assumption
(ls. 237-245)

These two responses thus reflect different perspectives, with Participant Hm referring to Rosalind's appeal to Ernest, and Participant Cf referring to similarity between Rosalind and rabbits in terms of timidity, thus relating it to power issues. The former response is a view of the situation as Ernest might see it, and the latter as Rosalind might.

In the case of these two participants, the differences between their responses can be explained with reference to the personal resonance factor, an aspect which it is not possible to explore in relation to the responses of Participants Of and Nm, who were not interviewed. The question about reminders did not appear on the questionnaire but was asked at the interview stage, which means that potentially important influences on response may not be elicited from participants who were not interviewed, an aspect to which I will return in section 5. 10.

Participants Cf and Hm both make reference to the fact that Rosalind is an orphan, an aspect of the story which is used to explain her reasons for marrying Ernest. However, Participant Cf refers directly to Rosalind's situation as a woman, whereas Participant Hm refers to her situation as a member of a 'lower class', readings which appear to be related to their personal experiences. Participant Cf claims that the story represents women's '*lack of power*' (l.6) an interpretation which explains her perception of Rosalind's 'timidity', referred to above. Rosalind's perceived powerlessness is also consistent with the comment that Ernest is controlling Rosalind by participating in the fantasy. Participant Cf's response to the question about reminders (Interview Question 3) refers specifically to marriage as entailing a loss of power, drawing parallels between Rosalind's powerlessness (l.445) with Participant Cf's own experience and that of other women:

I mean I was first married in 1970 so it was you know ... that was just the first time (laughs) so I mean you know my experience is then (.) erm (.) a little I (.) I mean I (.) I then married in 1980 (.) and (1) you know at the age of thirty and I'd been working and (.) erm (.) and owned my own car and everything (.) and I I got married (.) and erm (.) I had to get my husband's permission to open a bank account (ls. 423-434)

Participant Cf contrasts her own experience of the 'powerlessness' (l.445) entailed by marriage with the situation of 'young women nowadays' (l. 448-449) who are protected, for example, by the sexual discrimination act (ls. 445-457), an aspect of her re-telling which is consistent with the perception of Ernest's ability to control Rosalind. Participant Cf's sympathy for Rosalind is primarily due to her identification with her situation, Rosalind's 'lack of her power within the set social structure of the time' (ls. 6-7).

Participant Hm's response, by contrast, focuses on Rosalind's situation as a 'lower class' member of society trying to fit in with an 'upper class' family e.g., 'I interpreted it as somebody married above their status' (ls. 36-37). References to Rosalind's feelings are focused on this aspect, for example, her inability to compete in terms of wealth.

I think it was highlighted at the er (.) wedding anniversary when they were all there with their (.) ornate gold (.) offerings and she'd just the you know (.) tin box or whatever (ls. 47-52)

Rosalind's fantasy is thus perceived to be her way of coming to terms with her elevated situation. Participant Hm's preoccupation with Rosalind's 'class' can be explained by the personal resonance factor, since Participant Hm is a supporter of the Labour party and works for a Labour member of parliament.

The responses of Participants Cf and Hm are apparently influenced by their personal experiences, resulting in differing orientations to the characters' respective points of view. Participant Hm's ability to see things from Ernest's point of view may

be compared with the role of actor discussed in Chapter Two, whereas Participant Cf's response to Ernest more closely resembles that of observer, judging him by his actions. In attributional terms, Participant Cf locates the blame for the relationship problems in the person of Ernest. Participant Hm's apparent ability to see the point of view of both characters however renders the causal attribution framework more difficult to apply, and may actually be misleading, as will be considered in section 5.10 below.

The ability to adopt the role of actor, to see events as the character might see them, is most apparent in the response of Participant Ef. Her re-telling exhibits a greater involvement in the events of the story and empathy with Rosalind's point of view than has been evident so far. Participant Ef's comments offer a different reading relating to a 'marriage as security' theme, which can be seen as a reversal of the 'marriage as trap' theme, and she perceives the fantasy to be a means of 'connection' rather than escape.

She's trying to find some way (.) to switch on (.) with him she does find him attractive but erm (1) she's trying to find some way of (1) plugging in and I find that (.) that quite sad because she's so worried about losing that (.) and that means it's so important to her (1) and throughout the erm (.) the story (.) she's she's (.) very concerned about it (.) so she feels (.) like (1) very much out of his world (Participant Ef, ls. 31-43)

In this reading, the fantasy becomes a way of '*plugging in*' to Ernest's world, rather than escaping from it, and is in keeping with the romantic genre which predicts a happy ending for the female protagonist, as discussed in Chapter Two in relation to Radway's romance readers. The 'marriage as trap' theme is, as noted, the alternative, feminist version, which is resisted by this reader.

it was very blunt the end of the story (1) erm I wasn't (.) particularly happy with the ending I suppose because I'd enjoyed it that I wasn't happy with the ending (ls. 48-52)

Participant Ef's dissatisfaction with the ending is partly a result of her apparent ability to relate to Rosalind, and her use of the B (R) + ve mode shows the way in which she adopts Rosalind's psychological perspective to discuss her feelings. In addition, she refers directly to her own feelings, suggesting a close link between Rosalind's fictional experiences, and her own corresponding feelings of 'sadness' and pity. Participant Ef's sympathy for Rosalind is despite the fact that she perceives her to be unreliable in her perception of Ernest; in fact, Rosalind's unreliability on this point appears to render her even more sympathetic;

I see him more as a puny type of a man (laughs) although it does say he's muscular erm (.) that's why I think how much she's in love with him (.) I mean she sees all (.) his attributes (.) erm (2) but erm (3) well I suppose I see him as insensitive and (.) a man's man. (ls. 256-265)

The narrative mode of this participant's re-telling mirrors the B(R) mode of the original story, in the way that it is filtered through Rosalind's consciousness, and is linked to her own feelings, despite her recognition of Rosalind's potential unreliability ('she sees all his attributes' 'but...I see him as insensitive').

Participant Ef's reading is an indication of her sense of identification with Rosalind, she claims to 'relate to her' (1.5), and is a result of her ability to compare Rosalind's situation to her own life. Rosalind's fantasy world is compared to a 'shared joke' between married couples that 'nobody else has knowledge of', a 'little world of your own'. (ls 15-21) which reminds Participant Ef of her first marriage. Similarly, Rosalind's situation as 'outsider' in a large family is compared with the experience of a female relative;

my (.) new (.) sister-in-law (1) erm (.) was an only child (.) and she came into this large family and I (.) and I re (.) I could see her (.) in this situation (.) and she was very lost and really didn't know how to cope because they were a very close family (.) and they all used to get together on Sunday (.) and the (.) front room was packed with everybody and (.) and she just didn't feel part of it at all and hated every minute of it (ls. 89-100)

The emphasis on Participant Ef's own feelings (e.g., *'this (.) to me is very sad'* l.24), suggests a greater depth of involvement with the story than has been evident so far. The fictional events to which she refers are those which are prominent in the story, relating to recurring themes of the shared fantasy world, and Rosalind's feelings of isolation from the Thorburns, epitomised by the dinner party scene, 'events' which have direct relevance to Participant Ef's own, and her sister-in-law's, experience. Participant Ef's responses indicate a degree of empathy with Rosalind which is evident in her use of the B (R) + ve mode to refer to Rosalind's feelings, and is closely related to the B(R) + ve mode of the original, complemented by her use of the B (N) + ve mode to refer to her own feelings about Rosalind's experiences.

It is useful here to re-state Galper's distinction between 'empathy', 'sympathy', and 'understanding', described in Chapter Two. Galper argues that two factors indicate an empathetic response, namely 'the presence of a matching emotional response between subject and object' and the attribution of 'environmental or situational causes for the behaviour of the actor' (Galper, 1976: 334). These two aspects are noticeable in the re-telling of Participant Ef who refers to her own and Rosalind's feelings e.g., *'I suppose because I do feel strongly (.) about how she felt out of (.) his world'* (ls.202-203), and to the reasons for Rosalind's behaviour e.g.,

they'd lost communication (1) and (1) she'd lost (.) the magic in the marriage (.) she wanted to keep that' (ls. 53-54).

It is possible therefore to make a distinction between this type of response, which can be termed empathetic, and the 'sympathetic' responses discussed previously. As Galper notes, 'empathy' can be differentiated from

'sympathy,' 'projection,' 'understanding,' or simply the ability to label correctly the emotional state of another person' (ibid).

The difference between the re-telling of Participant Ef, and those of Participants Cf and Hm may be seen as the difference between empathy and sympathy. It is the way in which Participant Ef discusses her own feelings in B (N) + ve mode, as well as the degree of insight into Rosalind's mind apparent in her use of B (R) + ve mode, which allows me to make this distinction. I will return to this point in section 5. 8.

I noted above the appearance in the re-tellings of a 'Rosalind as victim' theme. In the case of the R1 readers, this theme appears in the responses of Participants Fm and Im, participants who disliked the story, and who were unable to relate it to their personal experiences. They are among the group of four R1 readers in whose re-tellings the B (R) mode does not appear (namely Participants Fm, Gf, Im, and Rm), although it is used minimally by Participant Fm to refer to Ernest. In the case of Participants Gf and Rm, their responses may be seen as the opposite of those of Participants Cf, Ef, and Hm, relating to the story merely as a fictional construct, rather than relating it to aspects of personal experience. The personal resonance factor is therefore missing from the responses of these four readers, the difference between them being that Participants Fm and Im disliked the story, and Participants Gf and Rm did not. The appearance of the 'Rosalind as victim' theme in the responses of Participants Fm and Im is not an indication of real sympathy, but refers to the author's intention in presenting Rosalind as a victim, which they assume to be an attempt to elicit sympathy for her e.g.,

The author presents her as the unfortunate victim (l.8)
...the victim of middle -class thoughtlessness (Participant Fm)
I think she (i.e., Woolf) perceives women.. to be the victims of the relationship
(Participant Im, ls. 160-161)

The re-tellings of these two participants lack the references to Rosalind's thoughts, probably as a result of the fact that both men disliked the story intensely. However, despite (because of) their lack of interest, they appear to adopt positions which are more closely aligned to Ernest's point of view. In the case of Participant Fm, this is reflected in his (minimal) use of the B R mode to refer to Ernest's feelings of 'boredom' which are provided as the reason for Ernest's decision to end the fantasy e.g.,

he gets bored with her (.) goes to his club whatever (.) smoker's thing (.) and then she dies (ls. 41-42).

In addition, he uses the more distanced B (N) - ve mode to refer to Rosalind;

I'd describe her as sort of out of her depth, probably ill-educated, emotionally insecure, 1920's lower middle class standard female neurotic (ls. 144-146)

The appearance of a degree of hedging, not typical of the rest of his responses, and the 'medium commitment' of '*probably*', suggests that Participant Fm is less certain of his opinion of Rosalind. His sympathetic response to her therefore seems to be a result of the questionnaire, which forces readers to choose between the characters, and he comments that men are '*not supposed to*' sympathise with Ernest (ls. 212-222).

Participant Im's re-telling has instances of the B (N) - ve mode to refer to both characters, and again is probably a result of his disinterest (see for example ls. 118-120) e.g.,

I suppose you could look at her and say that she's just empty headed (.) and I suppose if (.) if she's lacking (.) if she's not particularly er (.) well if she's got herself into a relationship (.) just by infatuation or whatever (.) erm I suppose you've got some sympathy for her but (.) she seems such such a (.) so empty headed to me that (.) I don't think she evokes any sympathy and I (.) and he's so (I) well I wouldn't even say one dimensional you can't even draw any conclusions about him (ls. 177-182)

His re-telling also includes an implication of blame on Rosalind's part i.e., she has '*got herself into a relationship just by infatuation*' (l. 178).

The remaining R1 readers, Participants Gf and Rm may be seen to adopt the opposite approach to that of Participants Cf, Ef and Hm, for example. Again the 'marriage as mistake/fantasy as compensation' theme appears in their responses e.g.;

(Rosalind's) experience of fantasy as a coping strategy which eventually failed. Participant Gf, (l.3)
the fantasy is a positive approach to their relationship -an attempt to impose a meaningful metaphor by which to live (Participant Rm, ls. 12-13)
when the marriage breaks down it is because her efforts to give it meaning are thwarted by Ernest's apathy. (Participant Rm, ls. 15-16)

The re-tellings of these two participants primarily refer to narrative techniques, and are in B N + ve mode. For example, Participant Gf refers to '*conventional phrases of description and value*' (l. 2) and to the difference between fiction and real life e.g.,

The story starts with the wedding, yet with an air of that being an end rather than a beginning - this to me is a clear sign that "the cause" lies before. Applying common sense rather than story logic, they each needed to talk and listen properly, and get to know one another (ls. 11-15)

The reference to the description of the wedding being a '*clear sign*' is reminiscent of the way in which certain textual items may be expected to act as triggers, and is consistent with Participant Of's predisposition to relate to the story merely as a work of fiction. Participant Rm's comments are fairly brief, but he similarly refers to the '*style*' of the story e.g.,

The concept of the secret 'rabbit' life was mildly amusing but I thought the style rather twee and the characters uninteresting. (ls. 3-4)

These comments may be compared with those of Participant Ef for example; the use of the B (N) + ve mode in these examples refer to the participants' opinions of the narrative style, rather than to their own feelings.

In this section I have considered the relationship between the insight into the character's thoughts, apparent in the R1 readers' use of the B R mode in their re-tellings, and their response. I have argued for a distinction between the empathetic response of Participant Ef, due to her ability to relate aspects of Rosalind's situation to her own life, and the sympathetic responses of Participants Cf and Hm, who also relate the text to personal aspects, but who do not emphasise their own feelings in the same way. I have also argued that the responses of Participants Cf and Hm differ in their respective orientations to Ernest's point of view, with Participant Hm referring to events as Ernest might, in addition to being able to see Rosalind's point of view. I have distinguished these personal readings from the disinterested responses of those readers who are not able to relate the text to their own experience, for example, Participants Im and Fm, whose re-tellings demonstrate understanding rather than sympathy *per se*. It is not apparent however whether the fact of being unable to identify with any aspect of the text results in disinterest, or whether their lack of interest prevents them from identifying with the text. Finally I have argued that the remaining two participants, Gf and Rm, relate to the text purely as a fictional construct, referring to literary devices and techniques. However, it is also apparent that the information about reminders of personal experiences only arises during the interviews, and since the latter participants were not interviewed, it is not apparent whether they are able to identify with any aspect of the text, although they differ from Participants Fm and Hm in their level of enjoyment. The different types of response elicited by the questionnaire and interviews will be considered further below. I will now consider the responses of the remaining participants who expressed different views on the questionnaire.

5. 7 (iii) 'R2' readers: Sympathy for Ernest

Participants Lf and Tf expressed most sympathy for Ernest on the questionnaire but unfortunately declined to be interviewed, giving as their reasons their dislike of the story and their opinion that they had nothing to add to their written comments. Some information can be gleaned from their responses however. Both participants are in the 56-65 age group, and neither claimed to have any formal literary training, although both have read widely, and both recognised that the story is written from Rosalind's point of view. I will consider the responses of Participant Lf first as these are the most detailed.

Although Participant Lf claims to be more sympathetic to Ernest, her responses seem to be more suggestive of a reading which is resistant to Rosalind's point of view. Her responses suggest an insight into Rosalind's thoughts which is this time combined with disapproval, apparent in her use of the B (N) + ve mode. Her opinions are foregrounded through the use of generics typical of this mode, but her re-telling also displays minimal insight into Rosalind's feelings. Above I noted that the perception that Rosalind is the character with whom readers are expected to sympathise can be based on the identification of a 'Rosalind as victim' theme in the responses of some of the R1 readers (e.g., Participants Fm and Im), and elicits a response which is 'morally sympathetic'. They recognise that the presentation of Rosalind as victim is expected to elicit sympathy, but their responses are not indicative of real sympathy. The 'Rosalind as victim' theme is also apparent in the responses of the R2 readers, but this time is used as a basis for disapproval, e.g.,

Rosalind is a victim in that although she is aware that things are not as they should be she is neither intelligent or strong minded enough to change them.
(Participant Lf, ls. 2-4)

The ‘marriage as trap’ theme is now converted into a ‘fantasy as trap’ theme, in which Rosalind is responsible for her own victim status. The insight into Rosalind’s mind results in resistance, since her failure to act and her decision to retreat into fantasy is perceived to be the reason why she is a victim; rather than an escape, the fantasy is the trap. However, Participant Lf also refers to mitigating circumstances, such as the period in which the story is set and the assumption of male superiority at that time (ls. 13-14). Ernest, by contrast, merits some approval for ‘*trying to please*’ Rosalind (l.9). Like Participant Hm, Participant Lf assumes that Rosalind’s appearance is the reason to Ernest’s behaviour, and that once her attraction for him has ‘*faded*’ (l.10), Ernest loses interest, something which is seen as ‘*typical*’ male behaviour (l.10). These readings are consistent, reflecting a society in which men have power and wealth and women must rely on their physical attractiveness in order to survive. Unlike Participant Cf however, who sees Rosalind as powerless in this situation, Participant Lf blames Rosalind herself for her victim status. Despite having expressed more sympathy for Ernest therefore, it is apparent that Participant Lf can be more accurately described as resisting Rosalind’s point of view, a suggestion which is supported by her disparaging comments about men’s attitudes to women e.g.,

The masculine assumption that once married woman should be satisfied with her lot. The reality that in fact many women were not. (ls.1-2)

Rosalind’s failure to act is therefore responsible for Participant L’s resistance to Rosalind’s perspective, and her fantasy is described as a ‘*silly game*’, rather than the survival mechanism described in the comments of some of the R1 women readers.

The perception of triviality in connection with Rosalind’s fantasy world is also apparent in the responses of Participant Tf, whose disapproval is again apparent in her use of the B (N) + ve mode. Participant Tf claims that she sympathises with Ernest because ‘*Rosalind lives in a world of her own*’ (l.5), thus blaming her for her

problems, like Participant Lf. Unfortunately, since neither of these participants wished to be interviewed, only the limited questionnaire data is available, and such information does not provide a complete picture of the factors which influence their responses. It seems counter-intuitive, however, to code the response of Participant Lf in particular as 'sympathetic to Ernest', given her disparaging comments about the attitudes of men towards women, and it is more accurate to see their responses as expressions of resistance to a passive female character. These comments are therefore the opposite of those of Participants Cf and Ef for example, whose sympathy for Rosalind resulted from their perception of her powerless situation.

5. 7 (iv) 'R3 Readers' - Sympathy for Both

Participants Sf and Am expressed sympathy for both characters on the questionnaire. However, they use the B (R) mode only to refer to Ernest. Their sympathy for Rosalind may be compared with the 'moral sympathy' expressed by participants Fm and Im, and is a result of her presentation as victim e.g.,

Where others find warmth and happiness in a situation the author isolates Rosalind from these feelings. (Participant Am, ls. 29-31)

The author concentrates more intensely on how Rosalind's world and relationship with Ernest affects her. She lets the audience understand quite vividly what is going on within her mind - right from the start, therefore she (the author) can put across just how she would like the audience to respond to her character Rosalind. (Participant Sf, ls. 16-20)

By contrast with the 'marriage as trap' theme reflected in the re-tellings of some of the R1 readers, participants Am and Sf describe the relationship in terms which suggest a more neutral position e.g.,

The characters come from different backgrounds appear to have little in common with each other in the real world and seemingly suggests that opposites don't always attract in the long term. (Participant Am, ls.2-4)

How relationships start off original, new and with enthusiasm then throughout its course it gradually alters owing to one or even both of the people changing through their lives. (Participant Sf, ls. 1-3)

These comments may be compared with those of Participant Of above, and are suggestive of the observer role; i.e., the B N + ve mode initially suggests that these participants are more distanced and objective about the characters, attributing blame to neither. However there are also differences between the responses of Participants Am and Sf; although both make reference to Ernest's feelings via B R + ve mode, Participant Sf claims that her sympathy for him is due to the fact that he is unaware of what is happening. In this respect the access to Rosalind's mind in the original story results in her feeling more sympathy for Ernest e.g.;

Although Rosalind is central in the work and because of the way the author has portrayed her and her thoughts, obviously enabling the audience to feel for her and her lost relationship at the end, I also feel sympathy for Ernest because even though he has lost in his relationship, he does not even recognise it and has obviously changed for the worse as he does not realise what he has let slip away. Ernest has become the lost one out of the two even though Rosalind is the one that suffers because she acknowledges it.
(Participant Sf, ls. 8-14)

The insight into Rosalind's mind provides Participant Sf with greater information about the relationship between the couple than Ernest possesses, granting Participant Sf a kind of omniscience which causes her to be more sympathetic towards Ernest as a result. These comments are consistent with her claim that she is sympathetic to both, and can be contrasted with the comments of Participant Am, who also expresses sympathy for both characters. Differences emerge in the language which Participant Am uses to talk about the characters which becomes more apparent during the interview. Initially, he refers to the feelings of both, commenting on Ernest's love for Rosalind and her hatred of his family (ls. 18-19). However, his reference to Ernest's desire for a family and Rosalind's inability or unwillingness (l.21), suggests a tendency to sympathise more with Ernest. The distinction between the language used to refer to the characters becomes more pronounced, with references to Rosalind predominantly in B(N) - ve mode, suggesting a lack of insight

into her feelings (e.g., *'she seemed unable to cope with the reality'* (l. 168, also ls. 212 and 242). In addition, he comments that Rosalind *'doesn't seem to be making much of an effort to try to act for herself'* (l. 309), a response which is similar to the way in which Participant Lf lost sympathy for Rosalind due to her failure to act. Participant Am's apparent inability to understand Rosalind's point of view leads to frustration at not being provided with sufficient information to understand Rosalind's feelings of unhappiness eg. *'she just wasn't happy but we don't know why she wasn't happy or anything'* (l. 61-62, also ls. 63, 567). His re-telling of the story with reference to Rosalind's point of view is in B(N) - ve mode, reinforcing the impression that he is attempting to interpret Rosalind's behaviour from the 'outside'. By contrast, he comments that he is given more 'facts' about Ernest (l. 734) and uses the B (R) + ve mode to refer to Ernest's thoughts and feelings e.g.,

because he loved her he was willing to join in her dreamworld (.) I think he got fed up with her in the end (l. 241)

The perception that Ernest loves Rosalind more than she loves him is the central theme in Participant Am's re-telling; like the social class readings of Participants Hm (and which is also referred to by Participant Fm, ls. 35-36), it is used as a basis for interpreting the behaviour of the characters e.g.,

again going back to this bit because (.) in the whole story (.) he's the only (1) he says he actually loves her as well (.) not anywhere in the story does she say (s)he loves him (ls. 314-316)

The distinction between the B(R) + ve mode used to describe Ernest's feelings and the more distanced B (N) - ve mode to refer to Rosalind, combined with Participant Am's impression that the author does not provide any information about what he really wants to know, suggests that he is closer to adopting Ernest's point of view than Rosalind's, despite his expression of sympathy for both. His perception that

Ernest loves Rosalind more than she loves him is his ‘unifying theme’ which makes the other elements explicable, and is a reference to one of those shifts in perspective which I predicted in Chapter Four might affect readers’ responses to Ernest.

Participant Am bases his reading on one of the rare insights into Ernest’s mind i.e., ‘he felt very much in love with her’ (p.71) which is, for Participant Am, the most important element of the story, and informs the remainder of his comments. His response suggests a greater degree of understanding of Ernest’s viewpoint, as shown in his use of the B (R) + ve mode to refer to Ernest’s feelings and his reference to his own feelings via B (N) + ve mode (*‘I feel sorry for him’* 1.324), by contrast with the more distanced B (N) - ve mode which is used to refer to Rosalind.

The fact that Participants Sf and Am claim to be sympathetic to both characters would appear to be confirmed by the fact that there are no clear attributions of blame. However, Participant Am’s references to Rosalind’s inability or unwillingness to have children, and his comments about Ernest’s feelings, could be interpreted as a situational attribution, consistent with his ability to ‘see’ things from Ernest’s point of view. Again, the issue of causal attributions will be considered further in section 5. 10 .

5. 7 (v) ‘R4 Readers’: Sympathy for Neither

The questionnaire responses of the remaining participants, namely Participants Um and Bf, are rather brief, probably a result of their claim to have sympathy for neither character. They may however be compared with those of Participants Am and Sf above, due to their use of the B N + ve mode in their re-tellings e.g;

They both fall into the trap of romance and then separately realism. The extremes of which separate them. (Participant Bf, ls. 12-13)
the relationship is sustained by an unrealistic view of the pair one to another. They use the fiction to avoid real contact. (Participant Um, ls 12-13)

As in the comments of Participants Of, Am and Sf, references are made to the situation of both characters. Participants Um and Bf do demonstrate minimal awareness of Rosalind's feelings in their use of the B R + ve mode e.g; '*Rosalind comes to feel secure*' (Participant Um, l.1.); '*she didn't like the reality*' (Participant Bf, l.124). As with Participants Gf and Rm above, their responses demonstrate a tendency to relate to the story merely as a fictional construct. Both refer to its predictability; Participant Um, for example, comments that it is '*cliched*' and '*dated*' (ls. 6-7) and that he is unable to '*identify*' with either character (l. 9). Participant Bf's response may be compared with that of Participant Nm; both refer to the opposition between imagination and an unattractive alternative, i.e., coldness and dullness, in the case of Participant Nm, rationalism in Participant Bf's re-telling. Participant Bf's perception that the world of imagination is opposed to that of rationalism brings in an additional dimension however; she was a Women's Studies student at the time of her participation, and she refers to the predictability of the story, and its stereotypical characters (ls. 4 and 8). In this case, Participant Bf's re-telling does appear to show evidence of the activation of a feminist code, since feminist readings often assume women to be located on the side of imagination and irrational behaviour, in contrast to the power and logic of men. Participant Bf also comments that the story reminded her of 'Mills and Boon' (ls. 20-21), formulaic romances often denounced by feminists. Thus the perceived predictability of a story which is seen as a variation on a romantic theme, results in the foregrounding of Participant Bf's own feelings of dislike and irritation, apparent in her use of the B (N) + ve mode. In addition, the perception of an opposition also between romance and the institution of marriage (l.1), is an aspect of the text which, as I noted in Chapter Four, represents a feminist code, a familiar dichotomy in feminist theory, and is noted by Participant Bf. While the 'marriage as

trap' theme is reflected in many of the comments discussed above, the rationalism/imagination opposition, combined with the marriage/romance, dichotomy, suggests a specifically feminist reading which is not apparent in the other responses. Therefore, although both Participants Bf and Um rely heavily on the literary experiential dimension, and perceive the story to be predictable, the feminist 'slant' adds an additional dimension to Participant Bf's re-telling. Her comments suggest that feminist readers 'know what to look for' (Fairley, 1989:294), to produce feminist readings, an aspect to which I will return in section 5. 9. In both of these cases however, the perceived predictability of the story results in disinterest. This is evident too in the responses of Participants Am, Fm, and Im, stories are expected to entertain, and readers express annoyance and frustration at their inability to enjoy their reading experience.

I have argued that the ability to relate the story to some aspect of the reader's experience is an important factor in response, resulting in a more empathetic response in the case of Participant Ef, for example. The personal resonance factor in the responses of Participant Cf and Hm also has an effect, causing them to express sympathy as a result of Rosalind's situation, although for different reasons, and enabling Participant Hm to see Ernest's point of view. This tendency is also apparent in the responses of Participant Am and Fm (although limited in the latter case), suggesting that it is easier for readers to adopt the point of view of same-sex characters. By contrast, Participants Bf and Nm relate to the text merely as a fictional construct, apparently unable to relate it to any aspect of their personal experience. These differences help partially to explain the similarities and differences among the readers, according to their ability to draw on one or other, or both, personal and

literary frameworks as an aid to interpretation. In addition, the way in which they attribute blame is linked to their response, as will be discussed in section 5.8. below. There are therefore differences in response between those readers who are able to relate the story to literary or personal experiences. In addition, although Participants Cf, Fm and Hm relate the fictional situations of the characters to real life experiences, it is also apparent that Participant Cf's response is on a more personal level than that of Participant Hm. She relates to Rosalind's experience as a married woman, whereas Participant Hm relates to her experience as a member of a 'lower class' in an 'upper class' environment. The sex of the Reflector is therefore a factor in these differences, with some of the female readers being able to relate to Rosalind on a more personal level than any of the men. Before considering the relationship between response and attribution of blame, I will discuss the differing types of response between the men and women.

5. 8 Personal Resonance and Themes of 'Human Significance'

I have argued that the ability to relate the story to some aspect of the reader's experience is an important factor in the reader's response. Related to the personal experience dimension is the sex of the reader in relation to the fictional character or Reflector. It is apparently easier for some of the women to relate to aspects of Rosalind's personal situation than it is for the men. I have already considered the difference between Participants Cf and Hm, and their differing orientations to Rosalind and Ernest's point of view. In addition, the 'social class' theme which informs Participant Hm's reading is on a more general level than Participant Cf's 'powerlessness of married women' theme, and also appears in the reading of Participant Im e.g.,

she marries above herself [...] he's got a big middle class family which is of course is out of date there's no middle (.) er it's middle class it's class without (having it as a term) these days (ls. 34-37)

I have argued that the women relate to Rosalind's situation on a more personal level, and that this is due to the fact that she is female. There is an additional factor to consider connected with marital status however; although Participant Hm is married, Participants Am, Fm, and Im are single, and the ability to relate to Rosalind's situation may also be affected by these factors. For example, the women's comments include references to their own experiences of marriage and divorce, and examples include the following;

the changes that that take place (.) perceptions that you have (.) erm (.) of marriage (.) before (.) are totally different (.) to the actuality
(Participant Cf, ls 21-23)

I am married (.) er but I have been divorced and I think (.) in some ways that (.) could have something to do with the piece
in my (.) previous marriage (.) there's this erm (1) little world of your own
(Participant Ef, ls. 5-7, and 15-16)

In addition, Participant Of, who was divorced at the time of her participation, commented that

My sympathies deteriorated for Ernest because I was more 'in tune' with the female viewpoint as presented in the story. (ls. 10-11)

It may not therefore be only the fact of the Reflector's sex that influences the women's responses, but their ability to relate to her situation as a woman within an unhappy marriage. The fact that I am also female may also be a factor in the interview situations, since the women are talking 'woman to woman' about women's experiences.

The men's tendency to translate Rosalind's experiences into more general terms can be seen in the following comments from Participants Am, and Hm;

you dream when you're a child don't you when you're on you (.) make up things to sort of occupy the time and I suppose that's what she was doing as well in her marriage (Participant Am, ls. 218-221)

It explained how people fantasise when trapped in a relationship they don't belong to (Participant Hm, ls. 8-9).

I think erm (.) a lot of people they (.) you know (.) erm (.) especially when they're a bit down and that (.) use their imagination you know to (.) create a (.) little fantasy (.) you know (.) just to (.) get away from the (.) depressing mood or whatever it is (.) whether it's (.) financial or whatever (Participant Hm, ls. 8-12)

In keeping with his social class theme, Participant Hm sees Rosalind's fantasy as a means of escaping from a depressing (financial) situation, whereas Participant Am sees it as a means of occupying the time. Rosalind's feelings about the fantasy world and her marriage are thus transformed from the specific to the non-specific, and may be compared with Participant Ef's 'magical world' reading, which allows Rosalind to connect with Ernest, or the survival mechanism readings of the other women.

Participant Im also refers to general situations rather than to the specifics of Rosalind's situation. He comments that '*One sympathises with anyone who is an orphan*' (l.7) and sees the story as a 'message' about the '*shallowness of relationships*' (l.157-158). Again, such terms relate to general, human experiences, rather than specific experiences such as those described by the women, a tendency which is also apparent in Participant Hm's summary of the story e.g., '*I interpreted it as somebody married above their status*' (ls. 36-38).

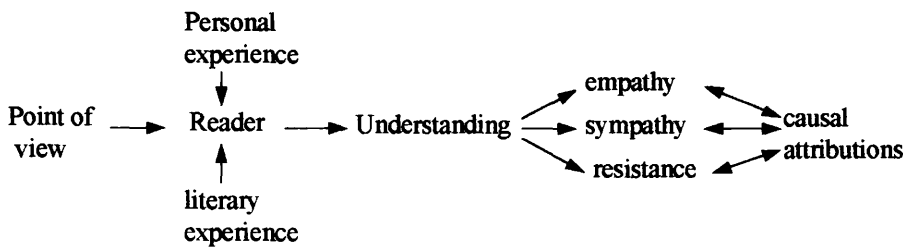
One other point of comparison is between the different perceptions of the 'childishness' of Rosalind's personality, an aspect referred to by Participants Nm, Of and Um. Participant Um's comment is the most neutral; he claims that the fantasy is a '*childish construct*' that has been the '*cement*' of the marriage (l. 4). Participant Of's comment is again focused on the fantasy as 'survival mechanism' e.g., '*she is childish*

but this is a survival strategy' (l.15). Participant Nm's response by contrast brings in additional ideological dimensions of innocence and nature. He describes Rosalind as a '*simple imaginative child of nature*' (l. 14) and comments that '*Her imaginative world clashes with his dull one*' (ls 2-4). This may be compared with the opposition between imagination and rationalism in Participant Bf's account, devoid of the feminist gloss. In both Participant Nm's and Participant Of's responses, the 'innocence' of Rosalind is contrasted with the coldness' and 'cruelty' of Ernest. In the comments of Participant Nm, Rosalind is not only childlike and therefore powerless in contrast her (adult) husband, she is also innocent, imaginative and close to nature, all elements which are ideologically 'good'. In the case of Participant Of, Rosalind is again seen as childish and imaginative; however, these qualities are linked to her sex, and her fantasy is seen as a deliberate retreat into childishness in order to survive her marriage, a fact of which she claims that '*more women may be aware*' (ls. 28-29)

There are differences therefore between the responses of the men and women readers to Rosalind's viewpoint, with the men relating to her on a less personal level than the women, and with some of the men apparently able to adopt Ernest's viewpoint. However, resistance to Rosalind's viewpoint is also apparent in the response of Participants Lf, and Tf, as a result of her perceived passivity. Sex differences are not the only factor in response therefore and I have suggested that the marital status of some of the female participants allows them to import personal experiences into their reading in order to relate to Rosalind's situation. In addition, I suggested that over-familiarity with specific genre or themes may result in irritation or boredom; Participant Fm's disinterested response and dislike of the story is partly a result of his dislike of modernist writers in general. Participants Bf and Um also perceived the story to be predictable and in the case of Participant Bf, the characters

stereotypical. The readers’ ability to draw on personal and/or literary experience has variable effects on response therefore, and may affect the way in which they attribute blame to the characters. Figure 5 below outlines the relationship between literary and personal experience, response and causal attributions.

Figure 5: Relationship between Fictional Point of view, Response, and Causal Attributions



The reader responds to fictional point of view by making reference to reminders of personal experiences, and/or experiences of other texts, genres, writers and so on. This latter dimension I have termed ‘literary experience’ and was discussed in Chapter Two under the term ‘narrative schemata’. It is possible, of course, for either of these two aspects to be more important than the other, as is apparent in the difference in response between participants Cf and Bf for example, with the former referring most often to her personal experiences and the latter to other texts, a difference which is also related to their age. Participant Cf is in the 36–45 age group, and has been married and divorced, experiences which obviously influence her reading. By contrast Participant Bf is in the 16–25 age group, and is single. A combination of point of view and one or both of the two types of experience can lead

to differences in the reader's subsequent response, which can be termed empathetic, sympathetic or resistant, or merely indicative of understanding, and which is apparent in the language used to re-tell the story. The fact that Participant Bf was a Women's Studies student at the time of her participation adds another dimension to the discussion, and her perception of the stereotypical nature of the characters may be compared with the responses of the women readers in the re-writing experiment to be discussed in section 5. 9 next. The women participants in this experiment exhibited a tendency to resist the point of view of the male Reflector *because* he was male, and reinforces Mills suggestion that feminist readers prioritise gender issues. However, another female participant in this experiment also resisted the point of view of the male Reflector. The results of the re-writing experiment will be considered next.

5. 9 Resisting Readings

The re-writing experiment was an attempt to investigate the effect of the sex of a fictional character on responses. The discussion so far has noted the way in which the male participants appear to translate Rosalind's experiences into more general situations with which they can identify, whereas the women relate to her situation on a more personal level. In order to assess whether the reverse tendency might occur, I produced a version of the story in which the roles of Ernest and Rosalind were reversed, so that Ernest became the character who created the fantasy, and Rosalind the one who ended it. The experiment was flawed in a number of ways, but most obvious perhaps was the fact that the characters did not now 'fit' into their respective roles, due to the period in which the story is set. Re-writing the characters' parts meant that Ernest was the partner who remained at home, which was obviously unsatisfactory, given the expected roles of men and women of the period. In addition, the characters' 'personalities' are stereotypically 'male' and 'female', as noted in the

comments of Participant Bf (1.8). In the original story, Rosalind speculates that Ernest does not 'look like an Ernest', and considers the type of the man she might have chosen. In an attempt to make the re-written version of the story equivalent, I changed Rosalind's name to 'Jane', hoping that this might imply similar qualities of seriousness as 'Ernest'. The problems with this are obvious, since there is no reason why our perceptions of the qualities implied by a name should be similar. The experiment was subsequently abandoned for these and other reasons. However, three questionnaires relating to the re-written story were completed and returned by Women's Studies students, (Participants Jf, Kf and Wf), and one from the public library (Participant Df). (Participant Profiles and Transcripts are contained in Appendices 7 and 8. The re-written version of the story is contained in Appendix 9). The fact that they were mainly completed by Women's Studies students is in fact coincidental, since equal numbers of this version and the original version of the story were distributed via the pigeon holes, but more answered on the re-written version, for reasons which are not apparent. Participant Bf is one of the participants contacted in this way.

The data obtained from these questionnaires suggest that the predisposition to read as/like a feminist is highly influential on responses. The Women's Studies students appeared to be attempting feminist readings of the story which were thwarted by the privileging of Ernest's viewpoint, leaving them feeling frustrated by the lack of a sympathetic female character. However, Participant Df, who obtained the questionnaire from the public library, also resisted Ernest's viewpoint, which suggests that there may be a desire for women readers to sympathise with female characters, and that the same tendency is not apparent in the responses of the men. I will return to this point below. Although the story was re-written from Ernest's point of view, none

of the participants expressed sympathy for him, although they recognised that his viewpoint was privileged. However, the Women's Studies students enjoyed the story, and their responses suggest that the re-written story offers them a different 'angle', since it is written from a male point of view. Short and Van Peer suggest that the notion of *expectancy* 'plays a crucial role' in evaluation when reading (1988:64), and that 'too high a degree of predictability' may give rise to 'negative evaluations' as is apparent in the responses of Participants Bf and Um. However, the enjoyment of the Women's Studies students is tempered by their frustration at having a male Reflector, as can be seen in the comments of Participant Jf.

Two main characters drawn relatively clearly, though frustratingly written to make the main female character more unsympathetic. Her loyalty to her family is seen as hurting him, she comes across as hard, especially at the end. (ls. 11-13)

Participant Jf struggles to reconcile her apparent desire to sympathise with 'Jane', with the characterisation of Ernest who is perceived to be '*too good to be true*' (l.15). By contrast, 'Jane's' characterisation is perceived to be '*ambiguous*' (l 16).

Participant Wf also enjoyed the story; however, her comments are interesting in that her reasons for sympathising with 'Jane' are a result of her perception that Ernest is trying to control her, a response which may be compared with Participant Cf's response to the original version. Despite the fact that the characters' roles have now been reversed, the perception of male dominance persists, and Participant Wf comments that Ernest '*imposed his fantasy on Jane and tried to mould her*' (ls. 8-9). This reaction is strikingly different from responses to the original story, where participants comment on Rosalind's 'powerlessness' against Ernest's actions; it is never suggested that Rosalind has the ability to 'impose' her fantasy on Ernest. The fact of having a male character's viewpoint in the re-written version does not result in

these participants having sympathy for his 'powerless' position; rather, it is assumed that Ernest has the power to 'mould' 'Jane', something which was never suggested of Rosalind in the original story. This reading also occurs in Participant Kf's comments.

I don't sympathise with Ernest because he seems to be moulding Jane to what he wants...Ernest seems to be trying to control Jane (ls. 7-9)

The fact that Ernest is male is sufficient to create expectations in these readers that he is attempting to control Jane, despite the fact that he occupies Rosalind's role. The responses of Participants Jf, Kf and Wf therefore demonstrate a predisposition to read the story as/like feminists, either as a result of their knowledge of Woolf or their feminist politics, or both. Some of their answers also suggest an objection to Ernest's (and to a lesser degree, 'Jane's') characterisation. For these readers, the imaginary world is not an escape for Ernest, as it was for Rosalind, but is a metaphor for his desire to 'impose' his will on his wife.

Participant Df, who was not a Women's Studies student, objected mainly to the characterisation of Ernest, suggesting that there was a weakness about him that did not fit with her perception of 'masculine' behaviour. Her resistance is based on real-life perceptions of male and female behaviour, and the failure of Ernest to act like a 'real man'. Her sympathies are with 'Jane' who is unfortunate enough to be married to him, as indicated by her questionnaire responses.

I felt as if I was Jane - progressively becoming more mature and responsible, but realising that I had a pathetic, inadequate man for a husband (ls.9-10)

Participant Df relates to 'Jane's' situation and is able to see events from her perspective (*'I felt as if I was Jane'*). Her comments suggest the adoption of the actor role, and link 'Jane's' feelings with her own, sympathising with her as a result of her husband's failure to live up to stereotypical ideas of 'masculinity'. Such stereotyping was confirmed at interview, where Participant Df stated that it was mainly the fact of

Ernest's sex which accounted for her perceptions of him as '*pathetic*' and was despite the fact that she recognises that she is '*supposed*' to have sympathy for Ernest because

It is written from Ernest's viewpoint and expresses and demonstrates his fears, and his need to retreat into a safe, albeit fantasy realm, and where he is a dominant character (ls. 12-14)

Again the notion of 'dominance' is associated with masculinity, and contradicts her perception of Ernest as '*pathetic*' and '*inadequate*'. The 'fantasy realm' is a place where Ernest can be dominant, an association which is never made with Rosalind's imaginary world in the original version, and which contrasts with the evaluation of the fantasy as '*silly*' and '*childish*' in the comments of Participants Tf and Nm, for example. Participant Df's dissatisfaction with Ernest's characterisation and her perception that it is not realistic (ls. 37-41) means that she finds it '*depressing*' (l. 5). Although all four readers resist the privileged viewpoint in the re-written story, their reasons for doing so are slightly different, and can be related to the different frameworks from which they draw. Participant Df's responses are related to the personal experience dimension, whereas the three Women's Studies students refer to literary experiences. Again, age may be a factor, since the Women's Studies students are all in the sixteen to twenty-five age group, whereas Participant Df is in the 36-45 age group, and it is obvious that age and experience are linked. For some readers, then, it is evident that the predisposition to read as/like feminists is of prior importance, as Mills argues, and the 'codes' in the re-written story were 'wrong'. While the Women's Studies students were interested and entertained by the fact of having a 'sympathetic' male Reflector, they were simultaneously frustrated by the fact that they were prevented from sympathising with 'Jane'. Ernest as a '*romantic dreamer*' is, as Participant Jf comments, is '*too good to be true*' and they look for alternative readings i.e., Ernest must be using the fantasy as a way of expressing his

dominance. However, such a politically motivated reading does not explain the resistance of Participant Df to Ernest's viewpoint, and reinforces the suggestion that women are more anxious to respond sympathetically to female characters. Participant Df feels sorry for 'Jane' due to her 'inadequate' husband. Despite the many flaws in this experiment, it is nevertheless suggestive of the way in which readers will resist an internal perspective which does not appeal to them, evidence for which has already been noted in the comments of Participants Lf and Tf.

The dimensions of literary and personal experience therefore affect the way in which readers relate to point of view, as shown in Figure 5. The predisposition to perform feminist readings illustrates the way in which resistance to a male Reflector can result in an attribution of blame, as illustrated by the responses of those participants who see the fantasy as his way of dominating Rosalind. Such a reading is similar to that of Participant Cf's response to the original story, in which her sympathy for Rosalind results in an attribution of blame against Ernest. In order to illustrate the relationship between point of view, response and causal attributions, I will now consider the responses of some of the participants along the dimensions illustrated in Figure 5.

5. 10 Readers' Responses and Causal Attributions

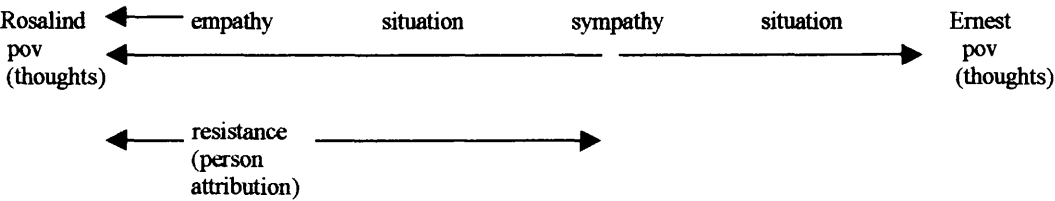
It was noted that causal attributions could be distinguished according to whether readers attribute blame to the characters or to the situation. However there are some difficulties associated with attribution theory as noted in Chapter Two, and which I will summarise here. Most important for the purposes of this study is the distinction between person and situation attributions. Person attributions can be distinguished according to whether the perceiver judges the behaviour of the actor in the events (or a character involved in fictional events) to be 1) intentional or 2) a result

of personal dispositions of the actor. Such judgements are based on a) consensus, b) consistency and c) distinctiveness information. Alternatively, a configuration of factors may be used to explain the behaviour of the actor on this occasion. However, as noted, researchers have discovered some problems in attempting to code responses along these lines, for example, difficulties in deciding whether an attribution should be coded 'internal' or 'external', and in accounting for 'occurrences' or involuntary actions. In addition, people often use combinations of person and situation attributions to explain events, and have been found to overemphasise attributions of intention at the expense of situational aspects, termed the 'fundamental attribution error'. Some of these difficulties can be illustrated with reference to the responses of the participants in this study, and become even more problematic on my attempt to apply them to the responses of the participants in the comparative study, resulting in my decision not to include attribution theory in my analytical framework. In order to assess both its usefulness, and the problems associated with attribution theory, I will consider the responses of Participants Cf, Ef and Hm.

Participant Ef draws on her personal experience as an aid to interpretation and is apparently able to see events as Rosalind sees them, i.e., to assume the role of actor. This is evident in her use of the B R + ve mode, and the reference to her own feelings in B (N) + ve mode. It might be expected therefore that she will also attribute blame as Rosalind might, i.e., by referring to aspects of Rosalind's situation, or by attributing blame to Ernest, since Rosalind's thoughts detail her unhappiness in the Thorburn family and the importance of the fantasy world which Ernest ends. Participant Ef's comment that Rosalind's fantasy is a way of '*plugging in*' to Ernest's world is, however, an expression of approval of Rosalind, rather than an attribution of blame towards Ernest. Her response supports the findings of Fiske Taylor and Etcoff, who

argue that the ability to see events as the actor might indicates empathy (Fiske *et al*, 1979:356), and Participant Ef's response is explicable in view of the fact that her re-telling is concerned only with Rosalind's point of view. In this respect, her re-telling mirrors that of the original text, which does not document Ernest's motives, only the effect of his actions on Rosalind. In order to discuss the relation between response and causal attributions, I will refer to Figure 6.

Figure 6: Person and Situation Attributions



It should be noted that the link between response and the way in which readers attribute blame may be variable, since for some readers their response provides a basis for causal attributions, whereas others may form causal attributions and use these as a basis for the explanations of their response. Figure 6 illustrates the way in which an empathetic response is closely related to Rosalind's point of view, and is distanced from Ernest's point of view, consistent with the way in which Participant Ef only refers to Rosalind's feelings. Resisting readings are also a direct consequence of the insight into Rosalind's mind, a result of the perception that she is responsible for her own victim status, and implying a person attribution against Rosalind. The sympathetic response of Participant Cf is a result of her references to both Rosalind's and Ernest's point of view, taking into account the situation of both, but condemning Ernest for the effect of his actions of Rosalind, i.e., a person attribution against him.

Similarly, Participant Hm's ability to see both Rosalind's and Ernest's point of view, and to make references to the situation of both, means that his response could be seen as equidistant from both. However, he is more distanced from Rosalind's point of view than is Participant Cf for example, due to his tendency to universalise aspects of Rosalind's situation, rather than relating to them on a personal level. Participant Am's response is closer still to Ernest, due to his perception of Ernest's feelings of love for Rosalind, which informs his reading, and his person attribution against Rosalind (e.g., '*she gives up trying*').

As noted, however, the attributional framework does not reflect the way in which readers take factors such as approval into account. The responses of Participants Am and Lf, for example, both express approval of Ernest's efforts to please Rosalind, and Participant Ef's empathetic response to Rosalind is a result of her approval of Rosalind's efforts to make the marriage work, aspects which are not adequately reflected in the attributional framework. In addition, coding the responses only in terms of cause and effect may actually be misleading, as I will illustrate with reference to the response of Participant Hm. Aspects of his re-telling reflect variable cause/effect relationships; for example, on the questionnaire he describes the cause of the relationship problems as being due to the fact that;

Ernest is used to someone being in charge. On the death of his mother he takes on his mother's mantle with his domination of Rosalind. (ls 20-21)

Such a comment could be seen as an attribution of blame against Ernest; however blaming Ernest is inconsistent with Participant Hm's apparent ability to see things from Ernest's point of view. The reason for the inconsistency arises from the fact that the quotation above is Participant Hm's *summary* of the story given in answer to Question One on the questionnaire, whereas his ability to adopt Ernest's point of

view emerges from the more detailed information arising from the interview data. The discussion so far has mainly focused on readers who were interviewed, since questionnaire responses are obviously less informative. The limited information derived from the questionnaire responses of some of the participants precluded me from making comparisons between the events of the story and their personal experience. Summaries of plot are not neutral accounts however, and do allow some analysis of the participants' language use; for example, I referred to the appearance of the 'marriage as trap' theme in the responses of Participants Mm and Vf in section 5.

6. (i). However, plot summaries provide a different kind of information than that obtained from interview data. The information obtained from the questionnaires can be used to infer the participants' perception of cause/effect relationships; Participant Nm's questionnaire responses, for example, suggest a straightforward relationship between his sympathetic response and causal attributions which locate the blame entirely in Ernest e.g., *'his coldness caused the marriage to end'* (ls. 9-10), and *'she is strangled ... by his dullness'* (ls. 14-15), (recorded as a person attribution against Ernest in column 12, Figure 4). 'Coldness' and 'dullness' are perceived to be stable qualities of Ernest which *'cause the marriage to end'* and *'strangle'* Rosalind, a reading which is consistent with his perception that Rosalind is only allowed to have her fantasy world *'until he tires of it and her'* (ls. 21-22), suggesting that Ernest is *deliberately* cold. The data obtained via the questionnaires are sometimes informative therefore, and demonstrate a 'skeletal' re-telling in which the basic elements of plot appear in condensed form, mainly illustrated in terms of causal attributions. Such summaries illustrate the way in which we select the most informative and important elements - as we perceive them - when re-telling stories. As Toolan notes, readers are

good at identifying what, relative to their own frameworks of world knowledge and cultural assumptions, is the 'main point' of a story.

(Toolan, 1988:29/30)

Toolan's comment helps to account for the similarities and differences in the responses of the participants discussed so far; while agreeing about the main elements of the story, readers respond differently according to the framework which they impose on the story. In the case of Participants Ef and Cf, for example, the framework is heavily influenced by the personal and specific, information which only arises from the interview data. Although Participant Hm's plot summary implies that he blames Ernest for the relationship problems, the interview data provides information which allows me to suggest that he is better able to adopt Ernest's point of view. Reading his plot summary in these terms, it can be seen that his comment that Ernest is '*used to being in charge*' is used as an excuse for Ernest's tendency to 'dominate' Rosalind. Therefore, the attributional framework presupposes that an element of blame attaches to one of the characters. It not only does not cater for the 'approval' factor, it fails to take into account 'excuses'. Participant Hm's comments are not really concerned with aspects of Ernest's situation, but with his upbringing. Again, this cannot really be termed a person attribution, even though it refers to aspects of Ernest's 'personality', since Participant does not blame Ernest for his domineering tendencies.

A similar problem is found in applying the framework to the responses of Participant Vf, who comments that the characters' problems are caused by a '*need*' of Rosalind's which is not being met by Ernest; e.g.,

*lack of understanding of Rosalind's needs by Ernest
her need to retain an identity of her own* (ls. 10-11)

Although it might be argued that blame for Ernest is implicit in her perception of Ernest's '*lack of understanding*', it could be argued equally well that Rosalind's

need is the cause of the problems i.e., a stable disposition of Rosalind's which results in the corresponding effect. Therefore, although causal attributions are informative in the barest essentials of plot, and are linked to the way that we make plot summaries using our perceptions of cause and effect, such relationships become less apparent if we attempt to analyse detailed responses such as those obtained from interview data, and may in fact be misleading, as in the case of Participant Hm, discussed above.

Since the only evidence of the reader's' response is sometimes derived from the questionnaire information, using the cause/effect structure of the re-telling may only provide information about their perception of the most important structural elements, not necessarily their response to the characters. In addition, the questionnaire asks readers to provide their perception of the cause of the relationship problems, and Ernest's decision to end the fantasy is both a cause and an important element in the plot. Readers' perception of this as the cause is therefore not necessarily an indication of an unsympathetic response to Ernest, as in the case of Participant Hm, for example. For this reason, causal attributions are sometimes informative, but not necessarily indicative of the readers' response. By only taking into account the 'blame' element, information is missed concerning readers' 'attribution of effort' i.e., characters' attempts to make the relationship work elicit expressions of approval which are not easily accounted for in a causal framework. One last problem associated with causal attributions concerns the subjectivity of the coder; I have for example argued that Participant Ef's references to Rosalind's feelings mean that she is not concerned with Ernest's point of view, which fits well with my interpretation of her response as empathetic. It is possible however to argue that she makes a person attribution against Ernest, blaming him for telling Rosalind to '*grow up*' (l.56).

Since the story concerns personal relationships it is more useful to consider the responses in accordance with a relationship schema. Such a schema predicts that relationships are reciprocal and balanced in respect of the amount of effort which each partner is prepared to invest in them. This is a more accurate way of analysing the responses in terms of praise and blame and will be considered next.

5. 11 Relationship Schema

It is now useful to return to the notion of schemata already referred to in Chapter Two, in particular, Kelley's notion of causal schemata. Kelley's suggestion that we possess a causal 'shorthand' with which we infer cause and effect relationships allowed me to suggest that readers' orientation to a character's point of view would predispose them to attribute blame to one or other of the characters, depending upon which elicited most sympathy from the reader. The attributional framework however is too specific to analyse the responses productively, since it is not necessarily the case that readers attribute blame to the character for which they have least sympathy. In addition, the causal framework does not reflect expressions of approval, and which may be explained with reference to a more generalised relationship schema. While we may have general expectations of cause and effect relationships, once the relationship schema is activated, these become subordinate to our expectations of what a relationship involves. To reiterate, a schema is background knowledge, which allows us to make inferences, based on our experiences of similar situations, people and events, and which an author can exploit. Such taken-for-granted information can be omitted, allowing the author to concentrate on more interesting and salient aspects. In a story such as *Lappin and Lapinova* which concerns interpersonal relationships, specifically, the relationship between a married couple, the reader can infer certain information even when only one point of view is presented, in

this case, Rosalind's. We know that there are always two 'sides' to a story about relationships; the extent to which we attribute blame is only one aspect. Others may generate approval, according to our perception of what relationships are like. The text thus activates a general schema which generates expectations of what is involved in being part of a relationship, which may again be affected by the reader's personal experience. A relationship schema therefore predicts certain things, 'default' elements, two of which are apparent in the re-tellings, namely;

a) Mutual effort

- ii) to make the relationship work
- ii) to please the other

b) Communication

If a) and b) are missing then we often perceive the non-offending partner to be justified in leaving the relationship. These aspects are apparent in the participants' responses and are a more reliable indication of approval, as well as blame. For example, Participant Ef perceives Rosalind's fantasy to be a way of establishing communication with Ernest ('*plugging in*'), involving effort on Rosalind's part in order to make the relationship work. Since Participant Ef's re-telling is primarily concerned with Rosalind's feelings, the effort is perceived to be all on Rosalind's part, resulting in approval for her, which is contrasted with Ernest e.g.,

they'd lost communication (1) and (1) she'd lost (.) the magic in the marriage (.) she wanted to keep that this was (.) the magic world and (.) and she he'd (.) more or less said you know (.) like grow up (ls. 53-56)

By contrast, Participant Cf's response, as noted above, is concerned with the effect of Ernest's actions on Rosalind. She refers specifically to his initial willingness to put effort into the relationship, which he then withdraws, resulting in her perception that he fails to fulfil his obligations to Rosalind e.g.;

he (.) played along with her games so she felt secure (.) and happy in that security because he did (.) participate in this imaginary (.) world (.) which was the only way that they were acceptable to each other (ls.257-259) he was no longer willing to help her survive the situation by going into escapism (ls. 32-33)

Her disapproval of Ernest's decision to stop participating in the fantasy is consistent with Participant Cf's sympathetic response to Rosalind. By contrast, Participant Hm's apparent ability to see events from Ernest's point of view is reflected in his perception that Ernest is the one who is putting in most of the effort e.g.,

he participated in this fantasy world just to please his wife', ls. 140-141) rather than lower his status in life (.) he thought to try (.) to bring her up to his status in life and she's found it very hard to cope (ls. 179-183) she's tried (.) you know he just started to go his own way (.) but first he tried to er (.) act out a fantasy (.) because it pleased her (ls. 207-208)

The perception that Ernest has tried to please Rosalind results in the impression that he is justified in giving up on the relationship; i.e., initially he 'tried', but eventually '*started to go his own way*'. No blame is attached to Rosalind, consistent with Participant Hm's expression of sympathy, and which is dependent upon his 'class' relationship reading; Rosalind has also 'tried', but '*found it hard to cope*'. Thus, the perception that both have made an effort is combined with his impression that Ernest's actions are justifiable, but that Rosalind is not to blame. Responses such as these are difficult to fit into the causal attributional framework, since they are more concerned with approval than blame, but are explicable in terms of our relationship schema, and are found even in the responses of Participant Fm, for example, who did not like the story or the characters. The perception of mutual effort ('*they find common ground in a shared fantasy*' 1.2) is combined with disapproval of Ernest, who gives up e.g.,

All too soon he abandons the fantasy as trivial concession to his wife and in the face of his indifference her dream dies and with it any marriage of spirit and communal sharing. (Participant Fm, ls. 2-5)

The assumption that relationships involve mutual effort is also apparent in the responses of Participants Of, Gf and Rm, e.g.;

they each needed to talk and listen properly, and get to know one another
(Participant Gf, ls. 12-15)

Ernest's cruelty in destroying the fantasy that has kept the marriage going makes me feel more sympathetic to Rosalind than I did at the beginning of the story .(Participant Of, ls 16-19)

the fantasy is a positive approach to their relationship -an attempt to impose a meaningful metaphor by which to live (Participant Rm, ls. 12-13)

when the marriage breaks down it is because her efforts to give it meaning are thwarted by Ernest's apathy. (Participant Rm, ls. 15-16)

The perception of the fantasy as a way of 'keeping the marriage going' is based on the idea of mutual effort in the re-telling of Participants Of and Rm, a corollary of which is that Ernest's decision to end the fantasy is attributed to 'cruelty' and 'apathy' respectively. Participant Gf, by contrast, blames the relationship breakdown on the failure of both characters to do their share of the relationship 'work' and communicate 'properly'.

The relationship schema also underpins the responses of the R3 readers, who express sympathy for both characters on the questionnaire. Participant Sf's expression of sympathy for Ernest is due to the fact that '*he does not realise what he has let slip away*' (l. 13) which reflects the lack of communication which is necessary for relationships. Participant Am's more involved response includes both the perception of greater effort on Ernest's part, and a lack of effort on Rosalind's.

because he loved her he was willing to er (1) join in her dreamworld I think he got fed up with her in the end when he realised that she was (1) always in this dreamworld and he wanted her to (.) her to join him in reality a bit more
(ls.240-242)

The perception that Ernest is doing more of the 'work' is combined with the justification for his ending of the fantasy e.g., '*he got fed up with her*', which is a similar response to that of Participant Hm. It may also be contrasted with the interpretation of Ernest's action as 'cruel' in the response of Participant Of, and

reinforces the suggestion that Participant Am is better able to see Ernest's point of view, as is the case with Participant Hm. The perception that Ernest is working harder at the relationship than Rosalind is also reflected in Participant Am's perception of the communication between them e.g.;

he says he actually loves her as well (.) not anywhere in the story does she say (s)he loves him (ls. 314-316)

It seems to me that there is very little communication between them in a normal sense. Ernest and Rosalind only seem as one in their secret world. (ls. 16-18)

Ernest's communication of his feelings to Rosalind is unreciprocated and results in approval of Ernest and disapproval of Rosalind. Like Participant Ef, Participant Am sees the fantasy world as a means of facilitating communication between Ernest and Rosalind, but differs in respect of the fact that he again perceives the effort to be greater on Ernest's part, e.g.;

I think he's giving it his best shot at the beginning you know like entering her world and everything and I think she just (.) gives up trying (ls. 318-319)

The way in which readers perceive Ernest's and Rosalind's effort to make the relationship work may explain the reason for their responses. Above I noted that Participant Lf apparently resists Rosalind's point of view due to the fact that she perceives her to be responsible for her own 'victim' status. In addition, her (limited) approval of Ernest is based on her perception of his efforts to please Rosalind.

Ernest was pompous and probably overbearing, but he did try to please her by playing her silly game (ls. 8-9)

This more accurately explains her resisting reading due to her perception of a lack of effort on Rosalind's part. The relationship schema is also apparent in the disinterested response of Participant Im, who perceives Ernest to be justified in his actions e.g.;

they're both trapped in a loveless marriage and maybe that's a way (.) his way (.) of getting out of it. (Participant Im, ls. 187-188)

The lack of communication between the couple is also perceived to be an indication of the inevitability of the breakdown in Participant Um's response;

the relationship is sustained by an unrealistic view of the pair one to another. They use the fiction to avoid real contact. (Participant Um, ls 12-13)

Comparing the readers' responses with our general expectations concerning relationships, it is possible to show that the relationship schema predicts certain things, but is also affected by the reader's response to Rosalind's point of view. These two aspects, general background knowledge and orientation to point of view, may be affected by the reader's personal experiences. However, the relationship schema is not apparent in the response of Participant Xm, the participant whose response I considered at the beginning of this discussion. His comment *that 'Rosalind is a schizophrenic with little relation to her surrounding world'* makes no reference to Ernest's role in the relationship, but attributes the cause of Rosalind's behaviour to hallucinogenic drugs. His response can however be related to his difficulty in making sense of the story, and highlights an additional aspect of schema theory, namely, what readers do when no specific schema is available, or activated, during the reading process. The predominance of Rosalind's point of view leaves Participant Xm confused about the events of the story, an effect, in his opinion, of her altered state of mind which renders the narration confusing. In order to discuss Participant Xm's response further, we can utilise Schank and Abelson's concept of 'Plans', 'Goals' and 'Themes'. A plan is a

Repository for general information that will connect events that cannot be connected by use of an available script or by standard causal chain expansion.
(Schank and Abelson, 1977:70)

Participant Xm's response suggests the utilisation of a generalised 'plan'. His knowledge that drugs can cause unusual behaviour is used to explain Rosalind's dependence on fantasy. Rosalind's desire to escape from the real world is thus a theme; i.e., the origin of her drug-use which allows Rosalind to achieve her 'goal', namely, (imaginary) escape from the confines of her marriage.

The notion of scripts, plans, goals and themes may be compared with the literary schemata discussed in Chapter Two. Those readers who are familiar with feminist writings will have available a script which allows them to predict the outcomes of feminist stories; i.e., marriage equals unhappiness for women and entails escape, either through madness or death. Awareness of such predictable outcomes is assimilated into the reader's background knowledge of what relationships involve, adding an additional dimension to the schema. In this case, relationships between women and their husbands in feminist fiction involve;

- a) asymmetrical power relationships
- b) lack of communication.

The first point is related to the expectation that relationships involve mutual effort (see section 5.ii) in order to make a relationship work and please the other. Typically, feminist fiction predicts that the asymmetrical power relationship between the 'partners' (with the balance of power in favour of the male) means that effort is the woman's contribution. Such asymmetry also means that her efforts remain unrewarded, results in a lack of communication, and the inevitability of her escape into madness or suicide. These themes emerge in Participants Xm's re-telling, but the lack of communication and mental 'escape' is slotted into a more distinctive theme; it is the use of drugs which is responsible, not Rosalind's marriage.

5. 12 Conclusion

The results of the preliminary study suggest that readers respond differently to internal point of view, and that sympathy is not inevitable. In order to summarise the findings, I will return to the questions with which I began this discussion.

- a) How does the participant's response compare with the role of implied reader assumed by the address of the text?

I began this discussion with an assumption that the reader's response to a character would be apparent in the type of modality which appears in the re-tellings. This is confirmed to some extent, since the use of the B (R) + ve mode does indicate an awareness of a character's thoughts and feelings, and indicates understanding. However, it is not necessarily indicative of a sympathetic response, since it can also be used as a basis for disapproval. However a combination of B (R) mode which refers to the character's feelings, and B (N) + ve mode which refers to the reader's own corresponding feelings, can indicate an empathetic response, as in the case of Participant Ef. I also predicted that the use of the B (R) and B (N) modes would be indicative of actor or observer roles respectively. Such a relationship is less easy to distinguish, due to the fact that the B (N) + ve mode can be used to indicate both approval and disapproval. The appearance of the B (N) – ve mode in the participant's re-telling is more informative however, suggesting a degree of distance from the characters which corresponds more accurately with the observer role, consistent with Simpson's framework. Simpson argues that this mode is evidence of the narrator's attempt to interpret events from external appearances, and is an indication of a lack of internal awareness. Its appearance in the re-tellings is a clear indication therefore of a distancing effect from the character's point of view.

- b) To what extent does the reader refer to feminist codes or genres?

I have argued that the appearance of the 'marriage as trap' theme in the re-tellings is not necessarily evidence of feminist code activation, but is a reflection of the theme of the original story. However, the responses of the Women's Studies Students do suggest the activation of feminist codes. Participant Bf's reference to the opposition between the institution of marriage, and romance, is one example. In addition, the responses of the participants in the re-writing experiment suggest that their resisting readings are a direct result of the sex of the Reflector, and they express their frustration at their inability to sympathise with 'Jane'. Their responses support Mills' argument that feminist readers are predisposed to perform feminist readings.

c) To what extent is the participant able to relate the story to personal experience?

Personal experience has been shown to have an effect on response. Participant Ef's sympathetic response is a result of the perception of similarity between Rosalind's situation, and her own, and her sister-in-law's experiences. Similarly, Participant Cf relates to Rosalind's situation in marriage, and compares this with the powerlessness of herself and other married women. Participant Hm relates to Rosalind's situation as a member of a 'lower' class, although this response is on a less personal level than those of the women.

Sex and marital status may also be factors, as is apparent in the responses of Participants Hm and Am, who are able to 'see' events from Ernest's point of view. There may be a predisposition therefore to sympathise more easily with same-sex characters. Such a tendency can also be seen in the women's responses; the Women's Studies students' desire to sympathise with 'Jane' is also apparent in the responses of Participants Tf and Lf, who are apparently prevented from sympathising with Rosalind due to her perceived childishness and passivity.

It also emerges that the women relate to the female character on a more personal level than the men, with the latter displaying a tendency to universalise Rosalind's experiences, thus transforming them into experiences with which anyone can identify. Mills also noted this trend in her study and suggested that men had difficulty in assuming the role of implied reader of a feminist poem. Responses of the men to Rosalind's viewpoint do seem to suggest that they have more difficulty than the women readers in relating to Rosalind's viewpoint. Similarly, the resistance of the women readers to Ernest's viewpoint in the re-written story lends support to this suggestion.

Literary experience has also been shown to have an effect on response, and has been discussed in relation to the responses of the Women's Studies students. The effect is also apparent in the response of Participant Um, who perceived the story to be predictable, and in Participant Fm's dislike of modernist writing in general (ls. 22-23). The different frameworks, i.e., the personal and the literary, can be seen to have different effects however. The ability to relate the story to personal experience results in a greater degree of proximity to a character's viewpoint, as is evident in the responses of Participants Ef, Hm and Am. By contrast, the tendency to relate the story to literary experience results in a distancing effect, as is apparent in the responses of Participants Bf, Um and the Women's Studies readers. One exception to this is in regard to the ending of the story, where Participant Ef's dissatisfaction with the ending is not only a result of her empathetic response to Rosalind, but can be compared with the findings of Radway's study of romance readers, who preferred the predictably happy ending of romances.

d) How does the reader attribute blame?

I have already discussed at some length the problems encountered in attempting to analyse the readers' responses in terms of causal attributions. My initial prediction that readers who are sympathetic to one character would attribute blame to the other character, or to the situation, was not confirmed. This is partly due to the fact that the attributional framework is not easily applicable, and in practice, readers use combinations of situation and person attributions. In addition, I have considered some of the problems of interpretation; it is not a simple procedure to distinguish internal from external attributions, as discussed in section 2. 7 (iii). While information obtained in this way is informative in terms of the way participants perceive the structuring of the plot, it does not capture adequately the participants' response to the characters. For the above reasons, a framework which incorporates readers' expressions of approval and disapproval is more productive. By relating readers' responses to general background knowledge of what relationships typically involve, and which I have termed a 'relationship schema', enables me to capture aspects of the responses for which the attributional framework is unable to cater.

There are some final points which arise from my discussion of the responses. Fairley's suggestion that readers find a unifying principle in order to make sense of the story is supported by the results of this study, as is her distinction between literal and figural readers. I have stressed the importance of personal reminders in the readings of Participants Hm and Ef, and the importance of literary frames of reference in the responses of the Women's Studies students. The distinction between these two types of response may also be linked to the different tendencies in Fairley's categories, and suggests that readers utilise the framework which is most easily accessible. This

distinction can also be seen in the responses of Participant Df, in contrast to the remaining participants in the re-writing experiment.

In my discussion of the empirical studies in Chapter Two, I noted that the relationship between sympathy and response remained indeterminate as to which came first; does sympathy result from an ability to relate to the point of view presented in the text, or did point of view encourage a sympathetic response? In the case of the readers who respond to the story on a personal level, it would seem that the ability to relate the text to some aspect of their personal life was the reason for their sympathetic response. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the readers who responded to the text as a literary construct were apparently less involved and less sympathetic. Such differences can be related to the suggestion that sophisticated readers suppress intuitive responses (Andringa, 1990:248). These issues will be further explored in Chapter Seven, the discussion of the results of the comparative study, with the exception that attribution theory will be largely omitted from the analytical framework.

Finally, I noted at the beginning of this chapter that the study described above was initially intended to be a pilot study which would form the basis of a larger study at a later stage. In my discussion of the aims of the study discussed above, I stated that my intention was to investigate the way in which readers respond to fictional point of view. My expectation was that the theme of story, namely, its preoccupation with a male/female relationship, would enable readers to relate to the events described and/or to the characters. I assumed that the results of such a pilot study would provide a clearer basis for conducting a larger piece of research based on the responses of a wider-ranging group of participants to the same story. However, I have also documented the problems I encountered as a result of using *Lappin and Lapinova* for

the purposes of my research. Firstly, some of the participants experienced difficulties in interpreting the story, due to the perceived difficulty of Woolf's style. Secondly, the potential unreliability of Rosalind as Reflector is compounded by the apparent datedness of the story, and rendered more readers than predicted unable to relate to her or to her situation. I was concerned that these factors may inhibit the research, and that a larger study based on the same story would prove less productive than conducting a further study based on a different story. I felt that a more modern story might prove more accessible in terms of the participants' ability to relate to the story and the characters, allowing them to engage more easily with the text and provide more detailed responses. The rationale for this decision was due to my assumption that it was the style of writing and the portrayal of Rosalind's experience which were largely responsible for the alienation of some readers. By simply replacing the Woolf story with a story which was similar in point of view terms, but which was more up-to-date in terms of setting and characters, I assumed that these problems could be limited, if not eliminated.

In fact, changing the story was more problematic than envisaged, due to the fact that the Atwood story used in the comparative study utilises two Reflectors, thus introducing an additional dimension into the analysis. Although the stories are similar in some respects therefore, since both are third-person narratives, there are also differences between them, which have given rise to slightly different types of response. These issues are discussed in detail in section 7.1. For these reasons, it was deemed more appropriate to refer to the two studies described in this thesis as comparative studies, rather than as a 'pilot study' and a 'main study'. As a result, they are referred to throughout as 'the preliminary study' and 'the comparative study'. In

Chapter Six I will analyse the short story used in the comparative study, Atwood's *Uglypuss*.

Chapter Six Analysis of Atwood's *Uglypuss*

6.1 Introduction

Uglypuss is a short story by Atwood, published as part of a collection in 1988 (see Appendix 10). Like *Lappin and Lapinova*, it is a third person narrative in B (R) mode; however, it is told in two sections with two Reflectors, Joel and Becka (See Appendix 8). The first section tells events from Joel's perspective (pp.83-103) and the second section from Becka's (pp. 103-110). Hence, the two parts will be referred to hereafter as 'Joel's section' and 'Becka's section' respectively.

Uglypuss is a much more modern story than the one used in the preliminary study, and the characters are more complex and detailed. The theme is again essentially a male/female relationship, and it is similar in this respect to *Lappin and Lapinova*, although the couple in Atwood's story are not married. Joel and Becka have been living together in Joel's apartment but have recently separated. The story follows the characters through one evening as they come to terms with the break up of their relationship, beginning with Joel's thoughts as he sits in his apartment, including his feelings as he answers a phone call from Becka. After agreeing that she can come over and talk, Joel ponders on their relationship and the probable outcome of Becka's visit; sex, and an attempt by Becka to move back in with him. Joel goes out in order to avoid her, picks up a girl, Amelia, in a restaurant and goes back to Amelia's apartment for sex. On returning home, Joel discovers that Becka has wrecked his furniture and stolen his cat, Uglypuss, threatening to dump it in a garbage can. Joel's section ends with him searching the streets in the hope of finding the cat alive.

Becka's section begins where Joel's ends, describing Becka's thoughts and feelings as she wanders the streets looking for somewhere to dump the drugged Uglypuss, reminiscing about the break up and her feelings about Joel and the future.

Her section ends with Becka standing weeping in a shop doorway after dumping Uglypuss in a garbage can.

Whereas the characterisation of Rosalind and Ernest in *Lappin and Lapinova* relies partly on the activation of familiar stereotypes, with Rosalind being a product of her time, the male and female characters in *Uglypuss* are a complex mixture of ‘personality’ traits. Although certain elements of the story may be seen as predictable, the characters themselves do not fit as readily into recognisable stereotypes and appear more realistic, and in this respect, lend themselves to analysis in a similar way to our analysis of the personalities of real people. As Chatman notes, while some might criticise a psychological analysis of fictional characters, some of the terms with which psychology has provided us are useful in understanding why characters such as Joel and Becka appear to be so ‘real’ (1978:138). In addition, we can assume that the implied author has included such information in order for us to understand the motivation behind the characters’ actions.

In describing the story I have provided a summary of the plot according to the sequence of events and the characters’ actions; however, of crucial importance is the insight into the characters’ minds, allowing us to deduce information about their respective and contrasting mind styles. In Joel’s section, we obtain information concerning his Jewish background, and his work as a director of street theatre. The political nature of his writing means that he is unpopular and feels himself to be persecuted; he receives threats and abuse from those he encounters. Of particular relevance is information which is obtained via Joel’s memories of his childhood relationship with his mother, which allows us to understand his (faulty) emotional development. In Becka’s section, the insight into her mind allows us to understand the depth of her feelings about her relationship with Joel. For this reason, Fowler’s

concept of 'mind style' is particularly relevant, due to the fact that most of the narrative information has its source in the mind of the characters, their thoughts and perceptions of events, as will be discussed further in section 6. 7.

Due to the length of the story, it is not possible to analyse every aspect in detail. My analysis will focus on the internal perspectives of the characters and the concentration on their thoughts (including memories), their feelings and attitudes, and their perceptions of the other character in their respective sections, aspects which explain their actions. In particular, there is a contrast between the way in which the characters view their relationship, which can be related to their individual 'mind-styles'. I will argue that Joel's view of relationships is tainted as a result of his childhood relationship with his mother, and revealed in his memories. Joel's upbringing has resulted in some psychological damage, and in many respects his adult development has been impaired. By applying insights from Freudian theories of child sexual development, and feminist theories concerning the construction of gender identity, I will illustrate the way in which Joel has developed an unusual attitude to sexual and personal relationships. I will subsequently consider the metaphorical structuring which underlies Joel's conceptualisations in accordance with Lakoff and Johnson's theory of cognitive metaphor, and which reflects his somewhat unusual mind-style. The internal perspective in Joel's section therefore serves two purposes; a) to provide the reader with an insight into Joel's attitudes to relationships which are often unusual and sometimes offensive, and b) to allow the reader to understand how those attitudes have arisen. In terms of the narrative structure of Joel's section, I will suggest that the foregrounding of Joel's boulomaic modality confirms the way in which Joel is concerned mainly with his own needs, and the B (R) + ve mode reinforces the impression of a self-centred character. By contrast, I will argue that

representation of his uncertainty and mistrust of others, narrated via B (R) - ve mode and highlighting Joel's epistemic modality, explains those attitudes. The two narrative modes thus illustrate two aspects of Joel's character, which I will describe as his 'egocentricity' and his 'paranoia', which are a result of his dysfunctional childhood relationship with his mother. The internal point of view explains the reasons for Joel's behaviour, resulting in a balance between Joel's thoughts and his actions.

I will contrast these aspects of Joel's characterisation with Becka's characterisation in her section, and I will suggest that Becka's view of relationships is more 'normal' than Joel's, and that she is forced to behave uncharacteristically as a result of her relationship with him. I will contrast the 'person' that Becka was before she met Joel, as revealed in her memories of her former attitude to life, with the 'person' she has subsequently become as a result of their relationship. I will argue that Becka's mind-style becomes 'contaminated' with the effect of Joel's view of relationships. As with Joel's section, Becka's attitudes are apparent via the internal perspective; the narration via B (R) + ve mode foregrounds her epistemic modality, demonstrating her awareness of Joel's personality and behaviour, and her deontic modality reflects her obligation to act in accordance with his desires if the relationship is to survive, although she subsequently realises that her duty is to herself. Becka's knowledge of Joel's character is therefore contrasted with her growing uncertainty about herself, and her feelings about their relationship which result in a loss of confidence. Becka's uncertainty, manifest in instances of the B (R) - ve mode, is therefore evidence of her self-doubt, a result of the psychological damage which she has suffered during her relationship with Joel. These two aspects of Becka's character show the way in which she has developed from a confident person to someone who is

‘emotionally disturbed’ (p.109). Becka’s section is also balanced between thought and actions therefore, with the former explaining the latter.

The two sections can therefore be seen as complementing one another ; the foregrounding of Joel’s boulomaic modality indicates his needs and desires, and is matched by the foregrounding of Becka’s epistemic and deontic modality, her awareness of those needs, and her conflicting obligations to Joel and herself.

Similarly, Joel’s uncertainty about the intentions of women are matched by Becka’s developing uncertainty about herself. The analysis thus focuses on those aspects which foster understanding (access to the characters’ thoughts and memories) and those which have the potential to detract sympathy, namely the actions of the characters (Joel’s infidelity and Becka’s act of revenge).

Due to the fact that, unlike the Woolf story, *Uglypuss* offers the point of view of both characters, it might be expected to arouse sympathy for both. However, due to the complexity of characterisation and the fact that both behave badly, the link between internal point of view and response is not straightforward, as will be discussed below. The ordering of the narrative presentation is also a factor, since the fact that Joel’s point of view is given first may affect the way in which Becka’s point of view is interpreted. This aspect of the narrative presentation will be considered after my discussion of the aspects of characterisation outlined above.

6. 2 Joel’s Section: Functions of the B (R) Narrative modes

In this part of the analysis, I will focus on the way in which the two narrative modes, B (R) + ve and B (R) – ve, illustrate two important aspects of Joel’s ‘personality’. The use of the B (R) + ve mode serves to reinforce the impression of Joel as egocentric, due to the foregrounding of Joel’s desires and opinions through deontic and boulomaic modality, and use of generics and evaluative language typical

of this mode. The use of the B (R) - ve mode indicates areas of uncertainty in Joel's life; his future as a director of street theatre, speculation concerning who might be persecuting him, and, most noticeably, the motives of the women with whom he comes into contact, particularly Becka. The foregrounding of Joel's epistemic modality emphasises Joel's lack of knowledge in these areas, and includes his perception that people want to control and manipulate him, suggesting a tendency towards paranoia. These facets of Joel's personality, as revealed through positive and negative modality, complement one another; because Joel sees himself as the centre of his universe, the actions of others are only viewed in relation to their effect on him. The two narrative modes thus relate directly to these two facets of Joel's personality, and derive from two crucial stages of his childhood development which are revealed through his memories.

6. 2 (i) Function of the B (R) + ve mode

The narrative in Joel's section immediately provides the reader with access to Joel's thoughts, feelings and perceptions ('Joel hates November'), and is firmly anchored in Joel's present. Deictic expressions relating to time, including the 'now' of 'November', 'this morning's paper', and the use of the present tense, including the information that 'Joel hasn't written anything for the past half-hour' are indicative of this. The temporal deictics give an impression that the reader is following Joel through the events of one evening in his life. However, the reader also has access to Joel's memories of past events, which provide important information concerning the reasons for his attitudes and actions. Joel's section has the following temporal structure:-

- 'now' - Joel's present :- an evening in Joel's life
- 'then' - Joel's past :-
 - recent (with Becka)
 - more distant (on his own)
 - distant past (with his mother)

‘then’ - immediate (uncertain) future

These three time elements link together to form an impression of Joel’s life up to and including the ‘present’. Rather than a strictly linear narration then, Joel’s narrative is made up of different ‘stories’, as memories of past events are interwoven with Joel’s present, and his memories are a way of fostering understanding for his character. It is the memory of Joel’s relationship with his mother, set in Joel’s distant past, which is most important, and helps to explain his recent relationship with Becka and the reasons for its breakdown. That the relationship is over as far as Joel is concerned is apparent in his feelings for Becka ‘now’, set in the present tense, and compared to his feelings for her ‘then’, (e.g., ‘He recalls, for an instant and with irritation, the Italian calligraphy pen Becka affected for a while’, (p.84); ‘He pictures Becka’s body, which she always holds back as the clincher, which is what he calls lush and she calls fat’, p.90). References to Joel’s recent past contain deictic phrases such as ‘last week’, ‘last summer’, ‘the last time they ate together’, ‘they’d still been trying to work it out then’, ‘he still loved her...then’. The reader is thus able to compare Joel’s present feelings for Becka, a combination of irritation and sexual attraction, with the way he felt about her in the past (‘he loved her... then’). In addition, his contradictory feelings about Becka are apparent in the phrase ‘He still loved her *in a simple way* then’ (p.98, my emphasis), containing two presuppositions, namely that ‘he did love Becka then’ but that his feelings are now more complicated i.e., no longer ‘simple’. The narrative thus juxtaposes Joel’s thoughts ‘then’ with his thoughts ‘now’ (c.f. ‘Early on he thought they’d been engaging in a dialogue...But viewed from here and now...’, p.87). Such juxtapositions are important, since they are symptomatic of Joel’s uncertainty about relationships, his suspicion of women, and his perception that they will betray him. These attitudes prevent him from remaining

faithful to Becka, and since Becka refuses to accept his infidelity, the relationship breaks down. In order to understand Joel's view of relationships it is necessary first to consider his memory of his childhood with his mother set in the distant past, and the way in which it has affected his emotional development and subsequent relationships with women. This information is contained in a memory which occurs to Joel after receiving a threatening phone call (p.88). He goes to the refrigerator to look for food, and finds it empty, apart from a pot of yoghurt which Becka has left behind. Speculating on the fact that Becka had done most of the shopping, Joel's thoughts turn first to Becka's cooking, and then to his relationship with his mother

The truth is that even Becka's normal cooking, good though it was, made him nervous. He always felt he was in the wrong house, not his, since he'd never associated home with edible food. His mother had been such a terrible cook that he'd left the dinner table hungry more evenings than not. At midnight he would prowl through his mother's apartment, stomach growling so loud you'd have thought it would wake her up, on bare criminal feet into the kitchen. Then followed the hunt for the only remotely digestible objects in the place, which were always baked goods from stores like Hunt's or Woman's Bakery, apple turnovers, muffins, cupcakes, cookies. She used to hide them on him; they'd never be in the refrigerator or the breadbox, not once she'd figured out that it was him who'd been eating them at night. Carefully, like a safe-cracker turning a sensitive combination lock, he'd dismantle the kitchen, moving one pot at a time, one stack of dishes. Sometimes she'd go so far as to stash them in the living room; once, even in the bathroom, under the sink. That was stooping pretty low. (pp.88/89)

This memory is coloured by Joel's perception at that time, (e.g., the 'loud growling of his stomach'), and the fear that his mother will wake is due to his feeling that his behaviour is 'criminal'. The perceptions of the child Joel are recalled in the language of the adult Joel (e.g., 'remotely digestible objects'), and reinforce the impression of his mind in the act of remembering. The memory of this incident allows the reader to understand Joel's unusual attitude to food and the aspect of his 'personality' which I have described as 'egocentric'. His mother's failure to provide him with sufficient nourishment leaves Joel needy, 'undernourished', and food

remains a major focus throughout his adult life. In Freudian terms, Joel remains at the oral stage of development; adults who derive excessive pleasure from oral activities show evidence of regression to the pleasures of chewing and sucking typical of infants (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology). Just as Freud argues that the infant's sex instinct is satisfied through the mouth, Joel's apparent fixation with food in later life suggests that he has been psychologically damaged by his early experiences.

Feeding was thought to be a particularly rich source of oral gratification, and Freud proposed that the child's later psychological development could be very much affected by the mother's feeding practices. (Schaffer, 1996:48)

Food thus becomes a hidden pleasure for which Joel must search and results in his perception of food as 'naughty, 'unhealthy and delicious' (p.102). Food is an object of desire which can only be indulged in secret, at night, but is also a contest between Joel and his mother, re-enacted in his adult relationships with women. Sex and food, relationships and contest become inextricably linked in Joel's mind, thus resulting in an unusual mind style which is partly explained by this early memory, as will be discussed further in section 6.7.

These aspects contribute to the formation of Joel's 'personality' as egocentric, defined in developmental psychology as 'the tendency to view the world from one's own perspective while failing to recognise that others may have different points of view' (Schaffer, 1996:256). By using this term I am combining its more usual use, referring to a tendency to be self-centred, with the psychological definition; the latter is not completely true of Joel's characterisation, since he does recognise that others have alternative points of view, although he does not recognise them as valid (cf. Becka's comments p.94, 'It's only your goddamned point of view that's valid, right?'). Joel's preoccupation with his own needs at the expense of others, and his tendency to view their actions only in terms of their effect on himself, is reflected in the use of the

B (R) + ve mode. As noted in Chapter Three, Simpson's use of the term 'positive' in relation to this type of modality is intended to reflect the narrator's foregrounded 'desires, duties, obligations and opinions' (Simpson, 1993:56), manifest in highlighted deontic and boulomaic modality. In Joel's case, the two aspects are linked to his egocentricity; the concentration on his own needs results in a corresponding focus on the duty of others towards himself. It should be noted at this point that obviously 'desire' and 'need' are slightly different concepts. Since wanting something is not the same as needing something. Joel's 'needs' may be seen as disguised desires, as should become clearer below. Analysis of Joel's modality illustrates that it is the boulomaic system which most accurately expresses Joel's 'personality', as can be seen in the following phrases;

What he needs is some food (p.86)

What he needs is someone who won't argue... (p. 96)

This is the kind of thing he needs to get him through November (p.100)

When he's at a low point...he needs to be with someone, and it doesn't much matter who, within limits (p101).

What he needs is perspective (p.103)

He wants sympathy (p. 97)

He wants the feeling of comfort this would bring (p.100/101)

The emphasis on Joel's needs and wants helps to produce an impression that he is primarily focused on himself. The use of 'need', in 'what he needs is someone who won't argue', may be seen as an instance of a disguised desire; Joel's egocentricity demands that he remains in control. The definition of this as a 'need', suggesting that it is as basic as food, allows him to justify this side of his 'personality' to himself. The repetition of the phrase 'what he needs', which occurs three times in the above examples, together with the phrase 'This is the kind of thing he needs', reinforces the impression of Joel's egocentricity; it presupposes that Joel needs *something*, and that this need can be fulfilled by women or food respectively. Related

to this aspect of his characterisation is the expression of those things which Joel finds *undesirable*;

Joel wouldn't want to pick up the kind of girl who would go to singles bars (p.93)

He doesn't want to be with someone who doesn't want to be with him (p.96)
...which isn't an experience he'd want to share with just anyone (p.100)

He prefers women who are soft-spoken and who don't live all the time in their heads(p.96)

The use of 'want' this time emphasises the fact that his relationships with women are based on his needs and wants. He 'prefers' women whose personalities allow him to be their main concern, someone who will offer sympathy without arguing. His desire for control even manifests itself in his relationship with his cat; 'He doesn't want her going out, not at night' (p.92). The insight into Joel's mind thus reflects his needs and desires, and suggests an implicit link between his preferred female company and his cat, since he wants to be able to control both.

Whereas Joel's boulomaic modality reflects his preoccupation with his own needs and desires, his deontic modality reflects his perception that a) others have a duty towards him and b) his only duty is to himself. The latter aspect can be seen in the way in which he feels that Becka should understand and excuse his infidelity e.g. 'She should have known she was the central relationship' (p.99). On the other hand, he feels he has a duty to tell the women with whom he has affairs how to behave e.g., 'he feels he ought to tell them they shouldn't behave like this' (p.100). These two examples reinforce the impression of his desire to act as he pleases and to control others (and suggests that his occupation as a director is well suited to his personality).

On finding that Becka has stolen Uglypuss, Joel's thoughts reflect his resentment that he is obliged to act against his own desires and in accordance with Becka's.

He'll have to go and see. (p.103)

he shouldn't be spending time on something this trivial, this personal. He should be conserving his energy for the important things (p.103)

The overwhelming emphasis on Joel's needs results in resentment at having to give priority to the needs of others, including his cat, and reflected in his deontic modality (e.g., 'he shouldn't', 'he should'). His resentment at Becka's actions is not primarily a result of concern for Uglypuss, but because he is forced to act against his own desires. This is evident too in his resentment at having to conceal his infidelity, since he feels that Becka ought to accept his behaviour e.g., 'he resented having to conceal things' (p.98), and reflects Joel's tendency to register the actions of others only according to their effect on himself. Such resentment is evident also in Joel's stubbornness in other areas; for example in his relationship with his landlord. Joel's perception is that the landlord has turned down the heat to 'spite him' (p.84). The fact that Joel is cold, is attributed by him to the landlord's actions of turning down the heat, not to Joel's refusal to pay for heating. However, an alternative perspective is offered in Becka's section; she assumes that the heating is off in the apartment because Joel has been 'antagonizing the landlord again' (p.104). In Joel's section however, the landlord's actions are seen as a cause of Joel's refusal to move, rather than an effect of Joel's antagonism. Some irony may be perceived in the narration, evident in the 'him, Joel' which reinforces the third person form, and serves to create a sense of distance. While the use of FIT presents an impression of Joel's thinking mind ('Joel hates November. As far as he's concerned they could drop it down the chute'), the fact that it is framed within a third-person narrative produces a subtle irony which highlights Joel's egocentric 'personality'

The landlord has turned down the heat again... Just for that, Joel refuses to move. (p.83)

A further feature of the B (R) + ve mode is the foregrounding of the Reflector's opinions, and this can be seen in the frequent references to Joel's likes and, less frequently, his dislikes.

He'd like to be someplace warm (p.83)
 He likes women, he likes just talking with them sometimes. The ones he likes talking with...
 He still loved her in a simple way then (p.98)
 he likes her better
 he likes this one well enough (p.100)
 Joel hates November (p.83)
 He couldn't stand to have love and fidelity extracted from him (p.99)

Simpson also argues that positive modality includes the suppression of the epistemic and perception modal systems, in favour of the foregrounding of opinions and evaluative language. However, Joel's concentration on his own needs does not necessitate a suppression of knowledge, and in some areas his certainty of his opinions is based on knowledge, as reflected in his epistemic modality e.g.,

He knows its unhealthy, but he indulges in unhealth as a kind of perverse rebellion against her, He used to justify his tastes by saying that this was what the average worker eats, but he knew even then that he was using ideology to cover for addiction. (p.88)

Joel's desire for certain kinds of food is therefore combined with the knowledge that it is bad for him, and that he is making excuses for his behaviour. Such awareness is also apparent in his epistemic modality concerning women.

she sighs over the phone better than any woman he's ever known (p.90)
 he knows from past experience (p.100)
 he knows that from experience too (p.100)
 Women don't like the term "muff," he knows that (p.100)
 they've been known to hold it against him (p.100)

His relationships with women are therefore based on his knowledge of similar past experiences. His speculation concerning Amelia for example is based on his previous knowledge of other women, and his preferences.

he guesses that she's the kind of girl who would read about it but would never

actually do it (p.97)

He guesses she's the kind of girl who has prisms hanging in her window (p.99)

he should know by now that the thin ones have more nerve-endings per square inch (p.99)

His 'guesses' are informed by experience, and he categorises women according to their degree of correspondence to his expectations. Therefore he 'should know' that 'thin' women are not necessarily quiet in bed, suggesting that he 'up-dates' his categories in the light of new information.

Joel's knowledge also extends to some aspects of his relationship with Becka, e.g.

if he didn't know the hidden costs (p.90)

he knows where talking about it leads (p.90)

he knows she'll stop at nothing (p.103)

However, because his knowledge of women is based on his perception of their external appearance, it is not knowledge of what women are really like. Evidence of this is found in his tendency to categorise women according to types, e.g., 'the thin ones', 'one of the vocal kind', and will be discussed further below.

I have noted Joel's predisposition to categorise women according to their external appearance, and I have argued that this is connected to Joel's perception of their ability to cater for his needs. It becomes apparent that Joel's evaluative language to describe women is also linked to food, and is most apparent in the contrast between Becka and Amelia. Although we are provided with little information about Becka's bodily appearance, we know that Joel sees her body as 'lush', whereas she describes it as 'fat' (p.90), and that, unlike his mother, Becka provides Joel with edible food (p.88). We can therefore assume that Becka's 'lushness' appeals to Joel. The adjectives used to describe Amelia, by contrast, emphasise her 'thin' build, e.g., 'small', 'pointed', 'peevisish', 'starved', and 'delicate' (p.99). She is also a vegetarian who is eating noodles when Joel meets her, (pp.96-97), and a 'tofu-girl' (p.102). This

information, combined with the description of her 'frail rib-cage' (p.99) suggests that Joel evaluates women according to their eating habits and consequent bodily characteristics. Whereas Becka's 'lushness' is apparently appealing to Joel, Amelia's body is evaluated in terms which associate her with under-nourishment, an aspect of Amelia which is less obviously attractive to Joel, since 'lushness' is associated with female sexuality. This is linked to the kind of food which Joel enjoys, which is, on the whole, the round and soft food associated with his childhood e.g. 'doughnuts', 'apple turnovers', 'muffins', 'cupcakes', and explains his desire for cake with lemon icing which he and Amelia can lick 'from each other's fingers' (p.100). The two aspects which connote comfort for Joel are contained in this image; the taste and texture of childhood food, and the animal-like licking which suggests the affection associated with his cat. While Amelia is able to provide for some of Joel's needs 'e.g., 'her simple physical presence, the animal warmth' (p.100), she does not provide his preferred food or body shape, reinforcing the suggestion of Joel's orality persisting into adulthood, and evident in his eating habits. As a child, Joel's manner of eating is greedy (e.g. 'cramming' and 'gloating', p.89) and apparently persists; he 'stuffs down' his food and is 'full and lazy' (p. 93), a image which is reinforced in Becka's section by her prediction that 'he'll be out of breath, panting because he's eaten too much for dinner (p.110).

Amelia's sexual behaviour, in particular, her vocality is therefore 'surprising' to Joel (p. 99), since it clashes with his expectation of how 'thin' women behave, i.e. with 'prissy restraint and decorum' (p. 99). His perception of women suggests the activation of a 'person schema', or more accurately in Joel's case, a 'woman schema', since women are apparently categorised independently of men. As noted in Chapter Two, the potential for such a schema to be distorted or based on stereotypes can be

seen in Joel's mode of thought. Similarly, his misinterpretation of women's personalities, due to his emphasis on external appearance, is evident in his relationship with Becka. Referring to the temporal deictics at the beginning of section 6. 2, I noted the difference between Joel's thoughts 'now', and his thoughts 'then'. The fact that he 'loved her then' is based on his perception of her 'personality' which he since 'realises' was mistaken.

She'd had a calmness, a patience that he's since realized was only a professional veneer, but at the time he'd settled into it like a hammock. (pp.95/6)

Becka must be re-categorised as someone who *will* argue, and who is apparently not calm (cf. 'as if Becka has been a storm, a hurricane' p.102). Thus, his apparent knowledge of women is based on superficial aspects rather than intimate knowledge, as he realises when he gets to know Becka. His tendency to overemphasise women's physical characteristics can be seen in his close scrutiny of Amelia's face.

Looking more closely, he can see she's not quite as young as he first thought. There are tiny shrivellings beginning around her eyes, a line forming from the nostril to the corner of her mouth; later it will extend down to her chin, which is small and pointed, and she will develop that peevish, starved look. Redheads have delicate skin, they age early. (p.99)

This example illustrates Simpson's comment that the Reflector becomes the 'deictic centre for spatial viewpoint' (Simpson, 1993:69). In this instance, the impression is produced that Joel is staring intently at Amelia's face, taking in the smallest physical details without registering any response or emotion on her part. This is again in keeping with Joel's egocentricity, his failure to register anything other than the effect of others on himself, an aspect which is also apparent in the following example.

He wonders if he likes her well enough to see her again, decides he probably doesn't. Nevertheless he makes a note of her phone number, memorising it off the bedside phone; he'll jot it down later, out in the kitchen, where she won't notice. He never knows when a thing like that will come in handy. Any port in a storm, and when he's at a low point, a trough in the graph, he needs to be with someone and it doesn't matter who, within limits. (p.101)

Liking someone is not normally seen as a conscious decision, yet Joel's thinking reinforces the impression that Joel is totally focused on himself; he might need someone 'and it doesn't matter who, within limits'. In this respect, Amelia is not seen as an individual in her own right, but is classified according to her reaction to Joel, as is evident in the way in which she is denied agency; she is someone who was 'getting laid by one of the troupe' (p.95). Similarly, Amelia's tendency to be 'one of the vocal kind' is seen as a 'tribute' to Joel (p.99), not a feature of Amelia herself. Taken to extreme, Joel's thinking illustrates his tendency to objectify women, to see them only as a collection of bodily characteristics, and to register the effect of parts of their body on himself.

Amelia lies against him, head on his biceps, red hair spilling across his arm, her mouth relaxed; he's grateful for her simple physical presence, the animal warmth. Women don't like the term "muff", he knows that; but for him it's both descriptive and affectionate: something furry that keeps you warm (p.100)

Amelia is viewed metonymically in terms of her bodily hair and its physical effect on Joel; her pubic hair ('muff') is seen as something 'furry that keeps you warm', as if it is an animal or article of clothing specifically designed to cater to Joel's needs. Again there is an implicit link to his cat, specifically, his naming of it as 'Uglympuss' is suggestive of the alternative slang term for pubic hair, 'pussy'. Joel notices only women's physical features, comparing and contrasting them with each other and (subconsciously) with his cat. 'Muff' is a term which Joel realises is disliked by women but is symptomatic of his tendency to see women as fragmented

into collections of physical attributes, resulting in his focus on Amelia's hair, mouth and 'muff', and in his categorisation of women as 'types' rather than people. Amelia is not unique but typical, as evident in Joel's use of generics e.g., 'Redheads have delicate skin, they age early' and 'the thin ones have more nerve endings per square inch.' (p.99). Similarly, in the extract above, the prepositions ('against', 'on', 'across') emphasise Joel's act of registering Amelia's physical presence in relation to his own body. In particular, the effect is produced of her passivity; She 'lies' still, her mouth is relaxed, and her hair moves apparently without her volition (i.e., 'spills'). The impression is that Joel sees women as passive recipients of male attention, an attitude which is consistent with his tendency to objectify them, and see them as animal-like. However, this does not alter the fact that Joel also sees women as capable of using their sexuality to manipulate men, as is evident in the way he sees Becka's physical attributes as being capable of deceiving him. Just as Becka can use her body as 'the clincher', her voice is a tool which she can use to her advantage to manipulate men, as illustrated by Joel's perception that Becka would have been able to use her voice to persuade the landlord to turn up the heat.

All she'd had to do was lean over the banister while the old bugger was standing below and use her good voice, the furry one, and up went the temperature, a trick that's not possible for Joel. (p.83)

Thus Joel perceives Becka as having a selection of voices from which she can choose in order to manipulate men; her 'furry' voice is given sexual connotations due to the causal link between 'all she'd had to do' and 'up went the temperature'. In this way, Becka's sexual attractiveness, like Amelia's, is animal-like ('furry'); however, whereas Amelia does not pose a threat because she has no interest in catching Joel ('no sticky fly-paper here'), Becka is assumed to have an ulterior motive. Her voice, like her body, is assumed by Joel to be capable of tricking him, as is apparent in his

reaction to her telephone call using ‘The small sad voice tonight, the one he never trusts’. (p.90).

Such tendencies extend even to his thinking about his cat, and reinforce the link between women and animals in his mind, e.g.,

He used to make pointed analyses of Uglypuss’s sexual hang-ups, to Becka, over breakfast. Whatever the reason, she gets herself messed up [...] (p.92)

Just as he only registers the actions of other people in relation to their effect on himself, so Joel doesn’t want Uglypuss to go out because ‘her ears are nicked, and he’s had it with the anti-biotic ointment’ (p.93). Again, rather than concern for the cat’s injuries, Joel’s thoughts suggest that he resents the effect on himself; i.e., having to treat her with ointment.

To sum up, the emphasis on Joel’s needs at the expense of the needs of others is expressed through boulomaic modality, and is complemented by minimal expression of deontic modality, focusing on the duty of others to comply with Joel’s needs and desires. Similarly, he perceives it to be his right to act on his own desires, and expresses resentment when prevented from doing so. Joel’s knowledge of women is based on external appearances which causes him to categorise women into types. His knowledge is not real knowledge, and he is therefore capable of being mistaken, an aspect which will be considered in section 6. 2 (ii), as it is expressed through B R - ve mode.

One final aspect of Joel’s ‘personality’ as expressed through B (R) + ve mode relates to the expression of apparently universal or timeless truths, or generic sentences, e.g.,

- 1) if you punch, they punch back (p.85)
- 2) bad taste was just an internalized establishment enforcer (p. 85)
- 3) wars are fought so those in power can stay there (p.94)
- 4) sex is merely a social preliminary, the way a handshake used to be (p.98)

These sentences serve to reinforce the impression of Joel's egocentricity for three reasons; firstly, Joel believes in freedom of speech, and apparently accepts that he cannot express his opinions publicly with impunity ('if you punch, they punch back'). However, his belief in free speech does not extend to Becka, and the deterioration of their relationship results in his use of language as a weapon against her, an aspect which will be considered more fully in section 6. 6. This was noted also above, as Joel feels it is his duty to tell other women how they should behave. Thus Joel's desire for free speech extends only to himself. Sentence 2, similarly, is Joel's justification for doing as he pleases; despite the fact that the political message of his plays may sometimes be offensive, a concern expressed by other members of the troupe (p.85). Rather than seeing himself as being responsible for the condemnation which he receives as a result, he justifies his actions by arguing that it is the 'establishment' which is to blame. He blames people for accepting 'external' interpretations of taste, rather than seeing himself as responsible for giving offence, just as he blamed the landlord, not himself, for his loss of heat in the apartment. Thirdly, the generic 'wars are fought so those in power can stay there' sums up Joel's inability to see the hypocrisy of his behaviour; despite his championing of minority causes, Joel denies the validity of other people's points of view, a feature of his egocentricity. The imposition of his viewpoint over those of others is necessary in order to retain power.

In summary then, the B R + ve mode serves to emphasise Joel's egocentricity, and his predisposition to consider his own needs as having priority over those of other people, an attitude which is explained by the access to his first memory of his relationship with his mother. Joel's certainty concerning his own opinions and what he wants (or doesn't want) from relationships results in the positive shading of the B (R)

mode throughout his section. However, his certainty about what women are like is based on their physical appearance and not real knowledge. As a result, Joel is often thrown into uncertainty when women act 'out of character', forcing him to re-evaluate their 'personalities' and motives. The second aspect of Joel's characterisation I have termed his 'paranoia', in the sense of 'an abnormal tendency to suspect and mistrust others.' (Oxford Reference Dictionary). I will now discuss this aspect more fully, attempting to show how this paranoia is reflected in the B (R) - ve mode.

6. 2 (ii) Function of the B R - ve mode

Just as Joel's 'egocentricity' can be linked to the fact that Joel's sexual development has been stranded at the oral stage, due to his mother's inability to provide him with 'normal' meals, his 'paranoia' is a result of his discovery that his mother was not hiding the food *from* him but was hiding it *in order* for him to find it, leaving him feeling betrayed and manipulated. His perception that his discovery of the food is a triumph therefore becomes tainted; it is not a victory over his mother after all, but is in fact the reverse; he has merely fulfilled her intention. This second memory occurs after having sex with Amelia.

He remembers, briefly, the day he figured out his mother was hiding the cookies, not so he wouldn't find them, but so he would, and how enraged, how betrayed he'd been. He'd seen the edge of her green chenille bathrobe whisking back around the corner; she'd been standing in the hall outside the kitchen, listening to him eat. She must have known what a rotten cook she was, and this was her backhanded way of making sure he got at least some food into him. That's what he thinks now, but at the time he merely felt he'd been controlled, manipulated by her all along. Maybe that was when he started to have his first doubts about free will. (p.101)

In this instance, the move into B (R) - ve mode, in particular the epistemic modal auxiliaries 'must have' in 'she must have known', reflects Joel's attempts to work out his mother's motives, and his realisation that he has not won a victory after all. His thoughts reflect the move from his certainty, indicated in the first memory, to

uncertainty as a result of his reinterpretation of his mother's behaviour. His earlier perception of himself as a 'criminal, a 'safe-cracker', who is ultimately triumphant, turns to feelings of anger and betrayal as he realises that his mother has been 'controlling him'. His mother's actions are thus transformed into a victory and a betrayal, and his own as merely a demonstration of her success, thereby destroying Joel's impression of his own 'free will' and leading to suspicion of the motives of others. Although the more mature Joel realises 'now' that his mother's behaviour is a result of the fact that she is a 'rotten cook', his wariness of being controlled has remained, and his mistrust of others is reflected in his attempts to interpret their behaviour, and his inability to commit himself to women. Joel's uncertainty is often apparent in his perception of Becka's motives, and has already been alluded to with reference to his thoughts about Becka 'then' and 'now'. The presence of the modal lexical verb 'thought' reinforces the sense of his uncertainty due to the fact that he has since changed his opinion, e.g.,

he thought they'd been engaging in a dialogue... he thought they'd been involved in a process of mutual adjustment and counter adjustment. But viewed from here and now...' (p.87)

The use of 'thought' suggests that he now sees himself to have made a mistake about his relationship with Becka. His uncertainty even extends however to such trivial matters as Becka's mis-pronunciation of the word 'bourgeoise'.

She pronounced it in three syllables: boor-joo-ice. Maybe she did this on purpose, to get at him by mutilating the word, though the only time he'd corrected her (the only time, he's sure of that), she'd said, "Well, excuse me for living." (p.86)

The phrase in parentheses ('the only time...') suggests that Joel's correction is something which has happened before, perhaps frequently, and suggests - as in the case of the landlord - that Joel does not see himself as responsible for the reaction of others to himself. In other words, Joel's memory of Becka's reaction allows us to infer

that it may be Joel's continual correcting of Becka's speech which causes her angry response ('excuse me for living'). Joel's perception that he is entitled to correct Becka is sustained by his suspicion that she is acting out of malice rather than ignorance, 'mutilating' the word 'on purpose' to get at him, thus displaying both his egocentricity and his paranoia. In addition, Joel's apparent belief in freedom of speech ('Don't you think there should be an open discussion of the situation?' p.85) is contradicted by his perceived ability to correct Becka's pronunciation, and to define the topic of their conversations (c.f. "We aren't talking about points of view. We're talking about history" p.94). While the egocentric side of his 'personality' is reflected in his tendency to tell Becka how to speak and what to speak about, his paranoia causes him to suspect her of having ulterior motives; 'she wants to 'get at him'.

Joel's mistrust is also apparent in his reaction to Becka's request to 'come over and talk about it'. His perception that he is unable to trust her is reflected in his self-questioning.

Is she working up to another move, back in? He's not sure he feels like going through the whole wash and spin cycle again. (p.90)

His mistrust of Becka's motives also leads him to suspect she may be responsible for his persecution.

[...] maybe it's Becka. Throwing an egg at his door, then phoning him to make up because she feels guilty about something she'll never confess to him she's done, that's her style. "What egg?" she'll say to him if he asks, making her innocent chipmunk eyes, and how will he ever know? (p.91)

The use of FIT in this instance serves a similar purpose to FIT in first-person narratives in which there are transitions from positive to negative modality. Simpson notes that abrupt transitions from one to another

often result in a disorientating lack of purchase on events narrated, with things no longer as tangible and palpable as they were (1993:58)

Similarly, the use of FIT in B (R) - ve mode serves to indicate Joel's doubt about Becka's motives and of what she is capable e.g., 'is she working up to another move back in?' 'how will he ever know?'. Similarly, Joel is unable to judge her capabilities with regard to the cat.

She's never exactly loved Uglypuss, but surely she wouldn't murder. He fears the worst but he can't assume it. He'll have to go and see. (p.103)

Joel's deontic modality reflects his sense of obligation as a result of his uncertainty; ('he can't assume... He'll have to go and see'). Joel's section culminates in the final three paragraphs of his section with an oscillation between the positive and negative modes, as Joel comes to terms with Becka's actions. His frustration at being manipulated by Becka is illustrated in his sense of obligation reflected by his deontic modality; 'He shouldn't be spending time on something this trivial', 'he should be conserving his energy' (p.103). His resentment that Becka has managed to force him to deal with personal issues rather than 'the important things' precedes a return to negative modality, expressing Joel's uncertainty about Becka's intentions.

Maybe she was lying, maybe Uglypuss is safe and sound, at her new place, purring beside the hot air register. Maybe Becka is making him go through all this for nothing.[...] (p.103)

The transition from B (R) + ve mode into B (R) - ve mode now indicates Joel's hope that he is mistaken, rather than his suspicion that he is right and marks a change in Joel's attitudes. His previous suspicion of Becka's motives, reflected in B (R) - ve mode, is replaced by certainty ('Finally he knows that she'll stop at nothing', p.103). Joel's perception that his paranoia is justified results in a return to the egocentricity which typifies his characterisation, as he dwells on the effect of Becka's actions on himself. Rather than concern for his cat, Joel's thinking reflects his concern that he will look foolish shouting for it; *'Why did I have to give it that dumb name?'*

(p.103). The use of FIT allows the reader to contrast the 'state of shock' which Joel can be expected to experience, and his concern for the effect of Becka's actions on himself, having to face a future without his pet, rather than on the fate of the cat itself.

The B(R) – ve mode has a further effect of reinforcing the impression that Joel concentrates more on women's external appearances, rather than getting to know them. This can be seen in the words of estrangement which emphasise his interpretation of Amelia's behaviour, reinforcing the view of her from the 'outside', e.g.;

as if she hasn't been aware of his approach (p.96)
 as if she's faintly ashamed of herself for those groans (p.99)
 as if he's not a semi-stranger after all (p.100)

The estranged viewpoint explains Joel's 'surprise' at Amelia's behaviour (p. 99). Joel think he knows the type of woman Amelia is because of the way she looks;

you couldn't have told it by looking at her [...] Joel doesn't know why he always expects girls with pierced ears and miniature gold stars in them, high cheek bones and frail rib cages, to be quiet in bed (p.99)

This is an aspect of Joel's thinking which extends to his thoughts about other women. He ponders on their attitude towards him after sex, e.g., 'as if it's something he's done all by himself ... as if they've had nothing to do with it' (p.100).

The B (R) + ve mode in Joel's section thus serves to illustrate the two main facets which I have argued make up his characterisation. The emphasis on his own needs, the tendency to register the actions of others only according to the effect on himself, his perception of his duty to tell others how to behave, produce the impression of egocentricity, in the sense of being self-centred and unconcerned about the needs of others. This impression persists, despite his overt championing of minority causes, and is reflected in his opinions, his likes and dislikes, and evaluative language of women. This latter aspect will be considered more fully in section 6. 7 in

my discussion of Joel's mind-style, but has been alluded to in my discussion of Joel's categorisation of women. The egocentricity which I have identified is reflected most obviously in his attitude to women and his continued infidelity; i.e., his actions support the impression of him as self-centred. However, while the insight into his mind reveals these unpleasant aspects of his characterisation, it also explains them. The uncertainty and mistrust evident in the B (R) – ve mode provides information about the reasons for his behaviour, and his tendency towards paranoia. I will now consider the function of the B (R) modes in Becka's section.

6. 3 Function of the Narrative Modes in Becka's Section

The internal perspective in Becka's section serves two purposes;

- a) to provide the reader with an insight into Becka's thoughts about her relationship with Joel, and the way in which she perceives herself to have changed from a confident person to someone who is 'emotionally disturbed' (p.109);
- b) to allow the reader to understand the reasons for her act of revenge against Joel.

The B (R) mode in Becka's section serves two functions; the prioritising of Joel's needs in Joel's section results in a corresponding sense of Becka's obligation to comply with those needs, reflected in Becka's narrative through B (R) + ve mode. There are again two aspects to this; firstly, the foregrounding of Becka's deontic modality indicates her sense of obligation to comply with Joel's needs; however, following her realisation that the relationship has caused a change in her 'personality', her deontic modality reflects her perception that her duty subsequently is to herself. Secondly, the foregrounding of Becka's epistemic modality illustrates her awareness of Joel's personality and behaviour, and as such is an indication of *certainty*, contrasting with Joel's *uncertainty* about Becka's motives and those of other women.

The B (R) - ve mode serves to indicate Becka's growing uncertainty about herself, as she comes to perceive that her actions are not consistent with the 'person' she used to be, but are a result of the 'mean person' she has become (p.105). Becka's narration thus oscillates between certainty and uncertainty, as she thinks through her relationship with Joel, its effect on herself, and the future. Becka's narrative therefore has a similar temporal structure to that found in Joel's section, with details being provided about incidents which occur during her relationship with Joel, (thereby providing her perspective on incidents already narrated in Joel's section and which, like Joel's thoughts, includes information about their work in the theatre troupe); brief references to an earlier period before she met Joel and an indication of the type of person she was then; and her speculations on her uncertain future.

6. 3 (i) Function of the B (R) + ve Mode in Becka's Section

Becka's memories are less detailed than Joel's, and her thoughts revolve mainly around recent events. Of most interest for the purposes of this analysis is the contrast between the person Becka considers herself to have been 'then', and the person she feels she has become 'now' as a result of her relationship with Joel.

However, the beginning of Becka's section is apparently B (N) Neutral.

Becka walks along the street. She has often walked along this particular street. She tells herself there is nothing unusual about it. Both of her hands are bare, and there's blood on the right one and four thin lines of it across her cheek. In her right hand she's carrying an axe. (p.103)

The narrative at this point provides, for the most part, an external view of Becka, giving the impression at first that events are being 'viewed dispassionately' (Simpson, 1993:73). There is an air of detachment which, on closer examination, appears to emanate from Becka herself. This is evident in the appearance of B (R) + ve mode, 'She tells herself there is nothing unusual about it', which presupposes that

this *is* an unusual occasion, a fact which Becka must deny to herself. The reader knows that Becka's recent actions have been violent, since they have already been described in Joel's section ('as if Becka has been a storm, a hurricane' p.102). The narration at this point however denies access to Becka's memories of the incident in Joel's flat, and since this is uppermost in the reader's mind, produces a feeling of suspense; we do not yet know what she has done with the cat. The external view thus denies the reader little access to information other than that which might be gained from Becka's outward appearance; there is no information concerning what the blood on her hand or the lines on her cheek might be, although the reader infers that they are related to her kidnapping of the cat. The narration subsequently moves into B (R) + ve mode, allowing access to Becka's thoughts which are concentrated on happier times with Joel.

Actually it's smaller than an axe, it's a hatchet, the one Joel keeps beside the fireplace to split the kindling when he lights the fire. Once she liked to make love with him on the rug in front of the fireplace, in the orange glow from the candle. That was until he said there was always a draft and he'd rather be in bed, where it was warmer. After a while she figured out that he didn't really like being looked at; he had an odd sort of modesty, as if he felt his body belonged to him alone. Once she tried flattering him about it, but this was a bad move, you weren't supposed to compare. (pp.103/4)

The focus on the axe ('actually ...it's a hatchet, the one Joel keeps beside the fireplace') signals the move into B (R) + ve mode and more obviously into Becka's consciousness. The contrast between her thoughts and the flat feel of the apparently neutral narration which precedes them has the effect of suggesting that the flatness emanates in part from Becka's sense of shock at her own actions. The brief access into Becka's consciousness allowed by the phrase 'she tells herself there is nothing unusual about it', colours the neutrality of the rest and suggests that she is suppressing the memory of what she has done. As her attention is drawn to the hatchet in her hand

and she recalls its former use (but not its most recent- smashing Joel's furniture), the narration moves into B (R) + ve mode but maintains the suspense, as information is delayed about what has happened to Uglypuss.

Whereas Joel's section reveals Joel's preoccupation with his own needs, the insight into Becka's thoughts illustrates her perception that she is *unable* to fulfil her own needs. Although Becka likes to make love in front of the fire, she is obliged to defer to Joel's wishes and return to the bedroom, 'under the covers, like a married couple' (p.104). Becka's representation of Joel's speech through FIS ('he said there was always a draft and he'd rather be in bed', p.104), illustrates the way in which Joel's insistence on his own needs results in Becka's compliance. This is evident in the causal connection assumed between 'he'd rather be in bed, where it was warmer' and 'So then it was under the covers, like a married couple' (p.104). Similarly, Becka's deontic modality indicates her obligation to stop flattering Joel about his body; ('you weren't supposed to compare'). The importance of the hatchet is now explained ('It was looking at the axe that finally did it', p.104). As Becka waits for Joel to return to the apartment, she notices the axe in the hearth and remembers that she had 'wanted him to leave it on the back porch' (p.104). The presence of the axe is therefore a reminder of her inability to impose her wishes on Joel, further reinforced by the fact that 'Joel was gone when he said he'd be there' (p.104).

The impression of Joel as self-centred is reinforced in Becka's section, as he is apparently able to impose his wishes, desires, etc. on Becka. She, by contrast, is less able to insist on her own needs, than he is. This is apparent in the number of constructions using the modal operators 'could' and 'would', which indicate Joel's ability to impose his will and achieve his own ends, and Becka's inability to fulfil her

own needs. To illustrate this I will refer to the following extract which details Becka's thoughts as she waits for Joel in the apartment.

Even if he came back soon, he'd have that smug look and the smell of it still on him. She'd have the choice of ignoring it, in which case he won, or saying something, in which case he won also, because then he could accuse her of intruding on his privacy. It would be just another example, he'd say, of why things couldn't work out. That would make her angry - they could, they could work it out if he'd only try - and then he would criticize her for being angry. Her anger would be a demonstration of the power he still holds over her. She knows it, but she can't control it. This time was once too often.

It was always once too often. (p104)

The number of constructions using 'could and 'would' are noticeable e.g.,

She'd have the choice of ignoring it
He could accuse her of intruding on his privacy
It would be just another example, he'd say of why things couldn't work out
They could, they could work out if only he'd try

The emphasis in Becka's section is therefore on her inability to have her needs fulfilled. Her apparent choice ('she'd have the choice') is no choice, since Joel will 'win' whatever she decides to do. Becka's perception that 'they could work it out' is denied by Joel's insistence that 'things couldn't work out'. The axe thus symbolises Joel's unwillingness to compromise, and his attitudes force Becka to behave uncharacteristically. This is illustrated by the fact that Becka's 'wants', unlike Joel's, remain unfulfilled.

She doesn't want to be angry; she wants to be comforted. She wants a truce. she would like to be able to love someone; she would like to feel inhabited again (p.107)

Evidence of this is also apparent in the fact that Becka's wish for a child, 'the one he wouldn't let her have', (p.107), is superseded by Joel's ability to decide their future. Becka's inability to fulfil her desire for a child is one example which suggests that Joel is able to impose his needs in defiance of Becka's and 'get his own way'. Her inability to remain with the theatre troupe is another.

She couldn't stay with the troupe, even though she'd done such a good job of the headless corpses for the El Salvador piece in the spring, even though it was her who'd come up with Christ as a knitted sock. It would be disruptive for the troupe, they both agreed on that, to have her there; the tension, the uneven balance of conflicting egos. Or words to that effect. He was so good at that bullshit, the end result of which was that she'd been out of a job and he hadn't, and for a while she'd even felt noble about it. (p.109)

The use of 'couldn't' in 'she couldn't stay with the troupe' is ambiguous; initially it suggests a decision on Becka's part, that the circumstances render it impossible for her to stay. However it becomes apparent that it is actually Joel's words that Becka is remembering, suggesting that he has once again been successful in getting his own way. As director, Joel could have fired Becka, but he has allowed her to believe that her decision to leave is mutual ('they both agreed on that'). Language becomes a weapon in the war between Joel and Becka, an aspect which will be discussed below in the comparison of the characters' respective mind-styles.

Becka's modality also indicates her certainty about what would have happened if Joel had returned to the apartment during her attack on the furniture, and is reflected in the B (R) + ve mode foregrounding Becka's epistemic modality, based on her knowledge of what has happened in previous similar confrontations (cf. 'He was always doing that to her', 'This time was once too often. It was always once too often' p. 104). Whereas the foregrounding of Joel's epistemic modality in his section reflects his uncertainty and mistrust of women, Becka's epistemic modality reveals her knowledge of Joel's 'personality' and behaviour. She knows why Joel has gone out, and the reader's awareness of the Amelia incident lends credence to Becka's perceptions and produces an impression of her reliability; her knowledge is the result of many similar previous incidences. Unlike Joel's superficial knowledge of women based on their appearance, and his consequent ability to be mistaken, Becka knows Joel's 'personality' intimately, and, therefore, how to hurt him. This is reflected in her

thoughts about her act of revenge (e.g., 'This is what will really get to him, she knows' p.106), and her ability to imagine Joel's reaction;

he'll be out of breath, he'll have eaten too much for dinner..
People will think he's crazy. But he will only be mad with grief. (p.110)

6. 3 (ii) Function of the B (R) - ve Mode in Becka's Section

Becka's knowledge of Joel's infidelity is combined with an increasing lack of certainty about herself and the person she has become. Becka's epistemic modality may be compared with Joel's; in his section, his uncertainty and mistrust of women is apparent in the use of B (R) - ve mode, Becka's certainty about Joel's infidelity is apparent in B R + ve mode. The use of the B (R) + ve in Joel's section indicates his certainty about himself; what he needs, wants, and his opinions, and is apparent in his description of the type of women he 'prefers', and the fact that he is not 'ashamed' of his thoughts (p.96). In Becka's section, by contrast, the B R -ve mode indicates her growing lack of certainty and loss of confidence in herself, reflected in her self-questioning;

This is what he's turned me into, she thinks. I was never this mean before, I used to be a nice person, a nice girl. Didn't I? (p.105)

As noted above, such transitions from positive to negative modality give the impression of the Reflector's growing doubt. The use of FIT to reflect Becka's thoughts reveals her uncertainty and confusion as a result of the contrast between the way she is 'now' and the way she was 'then', e.g.,

She once thought she could handle anything.
Tonight she feels dingy, old. (p.107)

That Becka's actions are uncharacteristic is evident in her mixed emotions, manifest in the contrast between her horror and enjoyment which indicate the conflict between the 'person' she was 'then' and the 'person' she is 'now'.

She can't believe she's done what she's just done. What horrifies her is that she enjoyed it [...] (p.105)

This is followed by the shift into negative modality and self-questioning already noted. However, whereas the foregrounding of Becka's deontic modality initially signalled her obligation to comply with Joel's needs, her realisation that the relationship is over is reflected in the way in which her deontic modality now indicates her perception that her obligation is to herself.

She should never have called him. She should know by now that over is over (p.108)

Maybe she should go out hunting (p.109)

She should have taken it home with her. It was her cat too, more or less, once. (p.110)

Joel's infidelity makes Becka 'feel like nothing' (p.98) and her deontic modality indicates a change in her own attitude; 'she should never have called him' follows her realisation that her own behaviour must change since Joel's will not. As in Joel's section, Becka's thoughts 'now' reflect her uncertainty ('today she thought she loved him...now she's not so sure' p. 105), and indicate her realisation that she has been mistaken about Joel, again reflected in her self-questioning.

Now she feels as if she has committed a sacrilege. Why? Because for at least two years she thought he was God.

He isn't God. (p.110)

In my discussion of Joel's section, I noted the apparent association between women and animals in his mind. The insight into Becka's thoughts similarly suggests her awareness of this link.

He'd always thought more of the cat than he did of her. It used to make her sick, to watch the way he'd pick it up by the tail and run it through his hands, like sand, and the cat loved it, like the nauseating masochist it was. It was the kind of cat that drooled when you stroked it. It fawned all over him. Maybe the real reason she couldn't stand it was that it was a grotesque and stunted furry little parody of herself. Maybe this was what she looked like, to other people, when she was with him. Maybe this was what she looked like to him. She thinks of herself lying with her eyes closed and her mouth slack and open. Did

he remember what she looked like at those moments, when he was with others? (p.107)

The foregrounding of Becka's feelings of disgust at the cat's reaction to Joel's treatment are narrated in B(R) + ve mode, and are illustrated by the evaluative adjectives, 'nauseating', 'grotesque' and 'stunted', the choice of verbs, 'drooled', 'fawned', and the nouns, 'masochist' and 'parody'. The evaluative language relating to the cat's behaviour leads into a more uncertain attitude, reflected in the move into B(R) - ve mode as she considers the potential comparison with herself ('Maybe this was what she looked like to him'). The use of 'drooled' and 'fawned' paves the way for her memory of her own actions when Joel claimed he wanted her to 'share her life with him': 'How she melted over that, how she lapped it up!' (p.108). Her condemnation of the cat's 'fawning' behaviour thus leads to speculation about her own, and her worries about the way she appears to Joel indicate her loss of self-esteem. There is a contrast between the person who 'once thought she could handle anything', and the self-doubt indicated by the questioning in FIT 'Did he remember what she looked like at those moments, when he was with others?'. The way in which Joel's section emphasises his preoccupation with external appearances explains Becka's growing uncertainty about herself and her appearance, both when she is with Joel and the way she appears to other when she is with him. In this respect, Becka's kidnapping of the cat is symbolic, an attempt to destroy the 'person' that she has become, reinforced by her apparent estrangement from her own image as she stares at her reflection in the shop window; 'At the fur-coated woman inside, tears oozing down her cheeks. (p.110). Becka's image of herself lying asleep implies her awareness that Joel may scrutinise her face, just as he does Amelia's.

Joel's ability to impose his will on Becka is also responsible for her loss of self esteem, and her loss of certainty in her own worth is revealed in her thoughts. These

aspects of Becka's characterisation can be seen to be a direct result of Joel's attitudes, his preoccupation with his own needs and Becka's knowledge of his infidelity. As with Joel's section, the internal perspective in Becka's section explains the motivation behind her actions.

6. 4 Aspects of Characterisation Through Representation of Speech and Thought

I have compared the two sections of *Uglympuss* in terms of their narrative structure and the way in which these aspects form the foundation for characterisation; the characters' modality expressing aspects of their 'personalities' which are explained by the insight into their minds. However, information about the characters' 'personalities' is also obtained through the representation of their speech, the 'flavour' of which is often portrayed; Joel's speech patterns, for example, suggest Jewish intonation, as in 'You want murdered relatives? he'll tell them. I've got' (p.86). The way in which the characters' speech is presented reinforces the aspects of their 'personalities' discussed so far. Joel's language for example reflects two contrasting types of vocabulary belonging to two different registers, both of which are represented in his speech and thought. In this way the impression is produced of a complex and intelligent character, who is able to use language to his advantage to suit the occasion. For example, the 'Jewishness' of the FDS example above belongs to a private or social register which includes simple language, full of earthy colloquialisms, politically incorrect and slang expressions, and some Jewish words, and expletives. Examples include;

Elegant variation: The old rent-gouger (p.83) The old bugger (p.83)

Slang (euphemisms): Buns (p.83), nuts (x 3) (p.87), nut-cutter, (p.89) nut-slicers (p.91) muff (p.100)

Expletives: Boring personal shit (p.87) goddamn cat (p.92) Bullshit (p.94) shit (p.95) Total shit x2) (p.97) Histrionic bitch (p.102) Loonies, nuthouses (p.95)

Jewish words: *Schul* (p.85) shtick (p.87)

By contrast, there is a more complex set of vocabulary associated with the register of work, politics, and religion, and used to express his evaluation of people, express opinions, or sometimes as a put-down e.g.;

self-appointed committee on racial purity (p.86)
 distorted and censored versions (newspapers) (p.87)
 purblind and moronic (p.87)
 valid, authentic, purists' (p.94)
 surrealistic (p.97) antiquated (p.99)
 patriarchal paternalism (p.100)

The vocabulary of the story as a whole will be considered further in section 6. 7. The two registers are apparent in the representation of both Joel's speech and his thought. Thus for example, his perception of relationships as 'boring personal shit' and his opinion of the letters section of the newspapers as 'purblind and moronic' (p. 87) both appear in FIT using language drawn from both registers. Similarly, the phrase 'self-appointed committee on racial purity' appears in DS and is used as an insult, whereas 'he was using ideology to cover for addiction' (p.88) appears in FIT. These examples and others in B (R) + ve mode serve to reinforce the impression of Joel as opinionated, and may be contrasted with the self-questioning in FIT already noted in the B (R) - ve examples; 'what's the point in continuing, in a society like this one, where it's always two steps forward and two back?' (p.94). When contrasted with the 'earthier' register, of colloquialisms and expletives, for example, the impression of Joel as opinionated and self-centred, but also deep-thinking and disturbed is reinforced.

There is also a sense of irony in much of Joel's language use, for example;

Possibly the portable canvas mass grave, filled with baby dolls and splashed with red paint, had been going too far (p.85)
 Christ as a large knitted sock, in red and white stripes, might turn out to be too much for them (p.84)
 The Crucifixion according to Solemate Sox, with management as Judas (p.84)
 She was always lobbying for a real dining-room table, though, as Joel would point out with great reasonableness, it wouldn't have a double function (p.86)

In the first two sentences, the ironic ‘feel’ arises from the use of modal adverbs and auxiliaries ‘possibly’, and ‘might’ to refer to items which are *obviously* serious. In the first, a horrific image linking mass graves and infants, and in the second, a bizarre and potentially blasphemous image of Christ, are described with uncertain modality which undermines their seriousness. In the latter two sentences, the irony arises from the certainty reflected in the B(R) + ve mode, suggesting that a Ping-Pong table *is* a dining room table and that a knitted sock *is* Christ, neither of which is true, of course. There are some problems with arguing that the Joel is the source of the irony, since it could equally be argued that the implied author is the source. For example, the ‘great reasonableness’ which describes the manner of Joel’s speech is the narrator’s interpretation of the way in which the words are spoken. However, the irony is also a result of the ‘double function’ with which the Ping-pong table is attributed; since a Ping-pong table does not really have a double- function, and Joel is the source of the words, we can assume that the irony is also an aspect of his characterisation. As noted in Chapter Three, ambiguity is a feature of Free Indirect Discourse due to the fusion of voices of narrator and Reflector, and in Joel’s case, allows the characteristics of irony and a dry sense of humour to be attributed to him. In this respect, the ambiguity means that characterisation is partly dependent on the reader’s interpretation of the source of the expressions; my earlier suggestion that Becka is estranged from her own image due to her lack of confidence in herself is an example, since it could be argued that the description of the ‘fur-coated woman’ belongs to the narrator, and is not Becka’s perception of herself. The interpretation of ambiguous aspects of text such as those in FID is therefore an important influence on reader responses, as noted in the preliminary study, and I will consider this point further in my discussion of the comparative study in Chapter Seven.

Much of the impression of Becka's characterisation through speech is obtained in Joel's section. The following example is Joel's memory of Becka's teasing after she discovers him inspecting his bald patch in the mirror, represented in DS.

"Checked out your manly beauty this morning?" "Thought about Hair-Weeve?" "You'd look cute as a blonde. It would go with the skull." "Chest wigs yet?" "You could cut off some of your beard and glue it on the top, right?" (p.84)

These examples occur on various occasions but are remembered by Joel collectively, thereby reinforcing an impression of the relentlessness of Becka's teasing. They are followed by Joel's thought 'Maybe he had it coming', and the contrast between the lively impression of Becka's words and Joel's reflection on them suggests a confidence in Becka's 'personality' which contrasts with the lack of self esteem which I have argued is a feature of her characterisation. This is due to the fact that most of the representation of Becka's speech is found in Joel's section, whereas the representation of her internal feelings is, obviously, in Becka's section. The flavour of Becka's speech provides a vivid impression of her as cynical, even unpleasant, as can be seen in the following example in which Joel remembers Becka's words, and which is presented in FIS.

she justified it by saying they should pick symbolism the workers can tune into, and most of these workers are Portugese, they'll know all about Judas, you only have to look at the statues on their lawns, all those bleeding plaster Jesuses and Virgin Marys with their creepy-looking babies (p.84)

The juxtaposition of the adjectives 'bleeding' and 'creepy-looking' with descriptions of religious icons provides an impression of Becka as sacrilegious with a black sense of humour, an aspect of her characterisation which is not as apparent in her own section. Similarly, Joel's report of her humorous attempts to understand his infidelity reinforce the impression of her as confident and sarcastic.

Becka used to accuse him of having a detachable prick. In her version, he unscrewed it, put it on a leash, and took it out for walks, like a dachshund

without legs or a kind of truffle-hunting pig (her metaphor). According to her, it would stick itself into any hole or crevice it could find, anything vaguely funnel shaped, remotely female. In her more surrealistic inventions (when she was still trying to live with what she called this habit of his, before she switched to compulsion, when she was still trying to be humorous about it), he'd find himself stuck somewhere, in a mousehole or a dead tree or an outside faucet, unable to get loose, because his prick had made a mistake.
(pp.97-98)

Becka's language as represented by Joel in FIS appears both humorous and crude, and contrasts with the representation of her feelings in her own section. Faint echoes of this aspect of her characterisation do emerge in Becka's section; e.g., her black humour ('Maybe it's catatonic. To coin a phrase', p.106) and expletives ('crap' p.106, 'bullshit', p.109), but on the whole, the internal perspective produces an impression of pain and loss which contrast with the impression of her produced by the representation of her speaking voice in Joel's section. The contrast serves to reinforce the impression of her loss of confidence as a result of her relationship with Joel; the confident and humorous Becka is replaced by the more subdued Becka who requests to 'come over and talk about it' (p.90). Alternatively, her apparent cynicism and unkindness (e.g., her teasing of Joel's baldness), can be seen to be a result of the 'mean person' she has changed into, illustrated by DT in her own section, e.g, 'This is what he's turned me into, she thinks', and followed by self-questioning in FIT;

I was never this mean before, I used to be a nice person, a nice girl, didn't I?
(p.105)

Thus although I have termed to two parts of the story 'Joel's section' and Becka's section, they are interwoven, and form a composite picture of the characters' 'personalities'. The two sections thus complement one another, with Joel's mistrust of women causing him to view them as different from himself, and explaining his emphasis on their physical appearance, and his perception of their ability to cater for his needs. I have argued that this is a result of his mother's inability to provide him

with adequate nourishment, thus denying him a basic need, and leaving him stranded at Freud's oral stage of development. In some respects, most of the source of the narrative information is in Joel's section, with interpretation of Becka's characterisation being dependent upon that information. Little information is provided concerning Becka's background independent of Joel, apart from minimal information concerning her relationship with her grandfather (p.105) and her mother (p.109). Interpretation of Becka's characterisation is determined to some extent by the way in which Joel's characterisation is developed. However, there are some contradictions in Joel's characterisation, since he does seem to desire some kind of emotional connection with women, as illustrated by the following example;

He likes women, he likes just talking with them sometimes. The ones he likes talking with, having a laugh with, these are the ones that become what he refers to privately as "repeaters". (p.98)

The preponderance of 'with' constructions ('talking with them', 'having a laugh with') suggests that Joel does want to connect with women on some level, but is prevented by his past relationship with his mother. However, the implication that they are perceived to be different from himself persists, as indicated by the apparent novelty of 'just talking with them', as if it is unusual to talk to women. The emphasis on 'with' however apparently contradicts my suggestion that his desire is to impose his will on women. This apparent contradiction can be explained with reference to feminist psychoanalytic theories of gender construction. Due to the importance of this theme to Joel's characterisation, it is worth elaborating upon here, since the access to Joel's thoughts shows how his relationship with his mother has affected his subsequent relationships with women.

6. 5 Gender Construction and Themes of Connection and Separation

Joel's 'faulty' mothering illustrates a theme in feminist debate concerning the way in which feminine and masculine gendered identities are constructed, and relates particularly well to the theory of Nancy Chodorow, for example, described by Kegan Gardiner, (1985). Discussions such as these typically centre on the role of the mother, focusing on aspects such as similarity and difference, connection and separation. The argument suggests that although the first love object for both boys and girls is female, their mother, girls and boys differ in their relationships with her, since girls can use her as a role model, whereas boys must grow up to recognise themselves as different. Hence, according to Chodorow, the relationship between mothers and daughters is based on empathy and connection, whereas that between mothers and sons is defined by difference and separation. In addition, due to the fact that a mother exercises control, as well as providing for the child's needs, she thus becomes the focus not only of the child's demands but of her or his anger when those demands are not met. This results in different responses from female and male children; boys experience rage and fear of women which must be suppressed, emotions which are diminished in girls, who know that they too may one day assume 'maternal power'. (1985:133). The argument is somewhat simplistic, and as any parent can testify, children do not discriminate in their expressions of rage, nor is the suppression of rage noticeable in either sex. It might be also be argued that maternal 'power' is small compensation for lack of real power in a patriarchal society, and that girls are presumably aware of this at an early age. However, in adulthood, men's behaviour is construed as a continual assertion of their difference from women, an enactment and re-enactment of their 'masculinity', and an expression of the dominance which was denied them in childhood. In a patriarchal society, 'masculinity' is defined in terms of both

‘difference’ (from women) and ‘dominance’ (over women), and is manifested in sexual relationships.

Domination is not a nasty additive to nice eroticism, but its essence, for, in patriarchies, domination and submission constitute erotic excitement.
(ibid:135)

Chodorow, among others, sees heterosexual relationships as fraught with difficulties, since the differing socialisation patterns of boys and girls result in different expectations in later life. If the masculine sense of self implies individuality and separation from others, and the feminine sense of self involves empathy and connection, then interaction between men and women will be problematic, due to their contradictory expectations. Even if dominance and submission are the essence of sexual eroticism (an assumption which reproduces stereotypical gender roles), emotional compatibility is a different matter. The suggestion that girls and boys develop differently in emotional terms, as a result of their differing relationships with their mother, is used as an explanation for problematic adult relationships. This argument presupposes that women’s desire for connection means that they will always be disappointed in heterosexual relationships, since women ‘crave more intimacy than men can provide’ (1985:134). Such theories have allowed lesbian feminists such as Rich to suggest that female homosexuality is natural (ibid:134); the fact that women’s first love is for another female, their mother, explains why heterosexual relationships are so ‘difficult’.

The ‘difference’ approach to gendered identities is pervasive, due to its assumption that women are ‘nicer than men’ (ibid:), an attractive alternative to theories of female subordination. Problems in male/female relationships are therefore seen to be predictable and preventable, if both sexes understand that neither is to blame. Such modes of thought have recently surfaced in areas such as conversational

analysis and relationship advice, whose proponents argue that women and men should refrain from judging the behaviour of the opposite sex in accordance with their own norms, and simply accept that differences exist (e.g. Tannen, (1991), Gray, (1993)). This, however, is an argument that becomes circular in effect, since the recipients of such advice are predominantly female, i.e., those who are perceived to be the more concerned about the lack of intimacy and connection in male/female relationships in the first place, and the ones most willing to adjust. Hence, the implication is that women should make allowances for men who are unable to alter their behaviour.

Application of such ideas to the text is illuminating in terms of Joel's characterisation. His desire for physical intimacy with women is an expression of his masculine identity which insists on separation and dominance, not connection and empathy. The desire for dominance is therefore an attempt to recreate his triumphant feeling following his 'victory' over his mother. However, his realisation that his discovery of the food is not an expression of his independence, but merely *confirms* his dependence on his mother, results in his doubts about free will, and explains his paranoia, and attitude to personal relationships. On the one hand, in order to become 'masculine' in Chodorow's sense of the term, Joel must reassert his dominance in his adult relationships with women. On the other hand, he is still searching for someone to provide for his needs, due to his perceived childhood deprivation; he wants the comfort of connection he feels was denied him as a child. The desire for connection, to have someone who will fulfil his needs, is at odds with his desire for separation and dominance, hence, two contradictory impulses which are mutually exclusive.

That Joel does perceive women to be different from, and subordinate to, himself is apparent in his thoughts. As noted, the categorisation of women, the perception of them as collections of bodily characteristics, often animal-like, is

combined with an expectation of them as potentially nurturing and comforting, causing him to evaluate them with adjectives normally associated with food. Joel's attitudes therefore reflect a masculine identity which is constructed along the lines of difference and dominance, but which is undermined by his need for comfort and nurturance. Hence his tendency to perceive women as animal-like, different, and subordinate, suggests that he can connect with them only on a physical level, without having to consider the emotional aspect. Even the women that Joel likes to 'talk with' are categorised as 'repeaters' (p.98). In order to explore this aspect further and to illustrate the unusual nature of Joel's mind style, it is useful to examine the range of semantic fields from which the vocabulary of the story is drawn. This will provide the foundation for exploring the way in which the character's mind-styles are the result of 'consistent linguistic choices' (Fowler, 1996:213).

6. 6 Semantic Fields: Men and Women as 'Binary Opposites'

Feminist have argued that men and women, and the terms 'masculinity' and 'femininity', are often dichotomised, conceived of in terms of binary opposites, and aligned with positive and negative qualities respectively. Such 'oppositions' include those between culture and nature, truth and duplicity, reason and passion, day and night, with the terms located on the 'masculine' side being invested with more positive associations than those on the 'feminine' side (Green and Khan, 1985:3/4). In addition, those terms associated with the female always require 'control by the superior male' (ibid.). The perceived negativity in such terms as 'nature' may be debated, since it can be argued that nature is often perceived to be ideologically good in many respects. The link between nature and religion in Romantic poetry, for example, relies on the recognition of the undesirability of the 'opposite' term, 'culture'. However, it is the association between women, and nature 'in the raw', and

set against men and culture, (meaning ‘refinement’) which gives ‘nature’ its negative associations when applied to women. It is the untamed, uncivilised ‘wildness’ of nature which is ‘negative’, since it implies uncontrollability, an undesirable association for women in a patriarchal society.

Figure 7 lists the primary semantic fields from which the vocabulary of *Ugly puss* is drawn, and which form the foundation for the ‘dichotomy’ between men and women in the story.

Figure 7: Primary Semantic Fields in *Ugly puss*

War	(violence)			Politics	Religion	Nature		
	argument	Contest/ game	emotions				Disease/ Illness (physical)	Disease/ Illness (mental)
Mass grave	Accuse	Trick	Spite	Commie	Racial Purity	Rats	Beri-beri	High
Headless corpses	Criticise	Liar	Angry	Ideology	Gestapo	Whales	Constipation	Addiction
Coward	Conciliation	Conceal	Betrayed	Working-Class	Judas	Turtle eggs	Scurvy	Paranoid
Brave	Acquiescence	Challenge	Deadly	Patriarchal	Crucifixion	Parrot	Sneeze	Nervous
Truce	Bickering	Clincher	Unhappiness		Virgin Mary	Licking	Anti biotic	Disturbed
Rebellion	Complain	Move	Miserable		Christ	Lapped	Ointment	Mad
Generals		Tactics	Grief		God	Furry	Unhealth	Nuthouses
Guns		Ploy	Shock		Sacrilege	(water)	Drugs	Loonies
Firing squads		Winner	Violent		Prophets	Flowing	Dizzy	Drug tolerance
Encircle		Tribute	Guilt		Penitential	Washing	Lungs	Feeble minded
Escape			Ashamed		Temptation	Shore	Symptoms	Fool
Torture			Pain		Miracle	Soft foam	(ageing)	Masochist
Reward?			Confess		Beth Tzedec	Spilling (hair)	Dingy	Kinky
Neutral			Gloating		Yom Kippur	Falling (hair)	Old	
Slaughtered			Smug		Goy	Storm	Fading	
Biting?					Lebanon	Hurricane	Drooled	
Punch						(temperature)	Grotesque	
Kick						Steam	Heart (bleeds)	
Choke						Hot		
Stone						Cold		
Dragged						Charred?		
Threatened						Smouldering?		
Hurl						Warmth		
Hammer						Rain		
Pulls								
Break								
Messed-up								
Nicked								
Pierced								
Rape								
Adrenalin?								
Force								
Triumph								
Funeral								

Since the source of most of the information is the minds of the characters, Joel's in particular, the vocabulary can be seen to be a result of their modes of thought. Of course the language of the text as a whole 'belongs' to the implied author; just as the irony of some of Joel's language is ambiguous between narrator and Reflector, so the range of vocabulary is ultimately that of the implied author. The apparent opposition between masculine and feminine domains can be seen as an instantiation of a feminist code; they are familiar in feminist writings. War and Nature are superordinate categories which are frequently associated with the different sexes, and they bring in their wake associated other related categories. For example, on the 'masculine' side, the semantic field of War is associated with politics and religion, both sites of struggle or conflict, and are linked to Joel's work as a director, the political nature of his plays which causes antagonism among the community. Religion is of course an area which can be associated with women too, but in this story, it is religion as a source of conflict which is most relevant, and hence associated with the other 'masculine' areas of vocabulary, as should become clearer below.

Under the semantic field of 'War' falls the vocabulary associated with murder, torture, imprisonment, escape, etc., which appear in Joel's thoughts about relationships, as will be discussed in detail in section 6. 8. In addition, there is a link between the fields of 'War' and 'Religion' as a result of the theme of betrayal, apparent in the images of Christ and Judas in Christianity, and that between the Jewish day of atonement (Yom Kippur) and the betrayal of oppressed groups by Lebanon (arms sales to South Africa). Betrayal is one of the major emotions which defines Joel's feelings about his mother and which is imported into his adult relationships with women. Further links are established between the emotions aroused by war and religion which are again linked to betrayal (e.g. 'shame', 'guilt', 'confess'). In

addition, the concepts and emotions associated with wars are often apparent in our vocabulary to describe arguments and contests, and elicit similar emotions of anger, fear and so on. Thus, the semantic fields of war, religion and politics and associated aspects of guilt, shame and betrayal, vocabulary associated with pain, wounding and torture, can all be transferred on to the realm of personal relationships, as is the case in *Uglypuss*, mainly as a result of Joel's point of view, as I will illustrate below. The contaminating effect is pervasive; the paranoid side of Joel's personality has an effect on the way in which he thinks, and results in some of the terms from the 'masculine' side of the dichotomy being transposed onto, and contaminating the 'feminine' side. Relationships become areas of conflict, due to Joel's feelings of betrayal by his mother, and symbolised by the message of his plays, e.g., 'management as Judas' (p.84). The contaminating effect gives rise to a number of anomalies and contradictions; close relationships imply betrayal, and involve a struggle for control, women are the enemy, and food becomes simultaneously a weapon, and more exciting than sex. In short, Joel's relationship with his mother contaminates his world view and causes him to view all relationships in terms of betrayal and struggle, rendering him incapable of fidelity himself.

The semantic field of 'Nature' is, as noted, associated with Joel's view of women, and the 'animal-like' characteristics of Becka and Amelia have already been discussed. In addition, there are some additional associations, e.g., Becka's 'innocent chipmunk eyes' (p.91), and the herbs, whale posters and dried flowers associated with Amelia (p.99). These aspects, together with their actions and attributes ('licking', 'lapped', 'furry', hair 'spilling' and 'falling' like water) is reinforced by their preoccupation with the environment and distaste of war e.g., Becka's 'organic cereal and body-mind-energy phase', p.92, her insistence that 'Women make love. Men

make war', p.93, and Amelia's 'anti-nuke sticker' (p.101) and vegetarianism. These attributes of Nature are those which are conventionally associated with femininity, i.e. warmth, gentleness, softness, and peacefulness.

However, just as religion is associated with conflict in this story, nature similarly becomes associated with violence, illness and disease. Women's 'animal-like' characteristics are also a potential source of betrayal; Becka can use her body as the 'clincher', she can 'sigh' at Joel to achieve her aims (like the wind?), and she can 'handle' the landlord, a verb with sexual connotations, as noted above. Similarly, the nature images used to describe Becka's actions in the flat are those which connote violence; she is like a 'storm', a 'hurricane', or water with the power to destroy furniture (p.102). She is also associated with temperature extremes; Joel clothes are left 'smouldering'. The high proportion of items of vocabulary relating to mental illness continues the contaminating theme of war, suggesting that relationships, similarly, have an adverse effect on the mind, further linked to the debilitating effect of drugs. These are aspects which will be considered in my discussion of Becka's mind-style.

By contrast therefore with the desirable (for Joel) nurturing, comforting aspects associated with women and (domestic) animals, nature becomes contaminated with images of violence, consistent with the negativity of uncontrollable nature in the dichotomization of the sexes. Women as animal-like are also unpredictable, different, and potentially violent, unwelcome associations which are further reinforced by images of childlessness and infertility; Joel's 'nuts' are under continual threat (p. 87), and the only 'offspring' of the relationship are a kidnapped cat, plastic baby dolls (p.85), and Becka's anger 'sucking at her neck' and 'flowing out of her' leaving her empty (p.107).

In order to discuss more clearly the way in which the mapping from the ‘masculine’ war domain onto the realm of relationships has the power to contaminate and destroy, and to consider the ways in which Joel’s thinking is both similar to, and different from, our usual view of relationships, (and from Becka’s), it is useful to refer to Lakoff and Johnson’s theory of cognitive metaphor to illustrate Joel’s ‘mind-style’, an approach adopted by Semino and Swindlehurst (1996).

6. 7 Cognitive Metaphor and Mind-Style

In the classical view, metaphor was seen as an ‘ornament’, a decoration which could be added to or taken away from language as the occasion demanded. Aristotle, for example, felt that the use of metaphor distinguished literary language from ordinary language; ordinary language, in his opinion, involves clarity and is non-metaphorical, with metaphor being an added extra, the ‘seasoning of the meat’ (Hawkes, 1972:9). However, the modern view is that metaphor is inseparable from language, whether literary or non-literary. Lakoff and Johnson, for example, argue that metaphor is embedded in language and thought, and shapes the way we see the world; that ‘Our ordinary conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature’ (1980:3). Metaphor is a result of the cognitive structure of the brain since ‘human thought processes are largely metaphorical’ (ibid:6); we think metaphorically and this is reflected in our speech. However, the way in which metaphors are used differs with regard to the intended purpose, whether they assume a shared perception of the world, or are used to suggest an alternative way of ‘seeing’. It is this aspect which can be exploited in literature, and which I will argue is apparent in the representation of Joel’s mind style in *Ugrypuss*.

Richards argues that metaphor is the result of an ‘interaction’ between two thoughts, between the literal meaning, the ‘tenor’, (the item under discussion) and the

metaphorical meaning, or the ‘vehicle’ used to describe it (Hawkes, 1972:60/1).

Lakoff and Johnson (1983), and Lakoff (1993) make a similar distinction between ‘source domains’ (corresponding to Richard’s vehicle), and ‘target domains’ (Richard’s tenor). We draw items of vocabulary from the source domain in order to discuss areas of experience in the target domain; the ‘ground’ of the comparison is that aspect which the two have in common.

Lakoff and Johnson note that we have a tendency to conceptualise areas of emotional experience in physical terms, due to our experience as physical beings. Abstract emotions such as love are therefore described in terms of physical experiences, giving rise to such conventional metaphorical concepts as ‘Love is a Journey’ (1980:49), for example. This explains our perception that couples ‘travel through life together’, can ‘go their separate ways’ or ‘move in different directions’ when a relationship is in difficulties. As Lakoff notes,

the metaphor can be understood as a mapping [...] from a source domain (in this case, journeys) to a target domain (in this case, love).
(Lakoff, 1993:206/7)

Entities in the domain of love (lovers, common goals, difficulties), correspond to entities in the domain of journeys, (travellers, destinations, obstacles to overcome, and so on) and the love relationship becomes the vehicle in which they travel (Lakoff, 1993:206/7). Such conceptualisations form part of our relationship schema discussed in Chapter 5.

Semino (1997) illustrates that an eclectic approach to the analysis of literary texts can have illuminating effects. By combining insights from schema theory, possible world theory, and linguistic analysis, she shows how it is possible to explain otherwise confusing and contradictory texts such as Plath’s *The Applicant*. Similarly, it is possible to show how Joel’s mind-style is ‘abnormal’ by referring to expectations

predicted by the relationship schema, and the metaphors conventionally used to describe relationships. Lakoff and Johnson note that in addition to the Love is Journey construct, additional conventional modes of thinking include

Love is a physical force
 Love is a patient
 Love is madness
 Love is magic
 Love is war

These metaphorical structures give rise to such expressions as being ‘drawn’ to another person, that a relationship is ‘unhealthy’, that people can be ‘crazy’ about, or ‘entranced’ by, others, and can make ‘conquests’. It is the Love is War concept which largely underpins Joel’s thinking, as I will illustrate below. However, there is arguably a higher level of conceptualisation of love in terms of ‘connection’; i.e., when we are ‘in love’ with someone we see ourselves as connected to them, an aspect which is consistent with Lakoff and Johnson’s discussion of ‘ontological’ metaphors. They argue that we see ourselves as physical ‘objects’, and view ourselves as ‘containers’, with ‘a boundary and an in-out orientation’ (1980:29). A further distinction is made between containers which are ‘objects’ and those which are ‘substances’. Thus when we get into a bath, for example, we simultaneously get into an ‘object’, the bath, and a ‘substance’, the water. This conceptualisation in terms of substances applies to the state of being ‘in’ love, as Lakoff and Johnson note. However a corollary of this is that when we are ‘in love’ with someone, and it is reciprocated, we typically think of them as joining us in our ‘container’, thus forming a connection to form a ‘whole’; we are ‘joined together’, as in the words of the marriage ceremony, and often symbolised by couples holding hands. As a result, couples can ‘split’ or ‘break up’, thereby becoming ‘single’ again, and separate. The idea of connection then gives rise to such lower level metaphorical concepts as ‘love is a journey’, i.e., a journey which we travel together

with another person, the person with whom we are 'in love' and to whom we are connected. The end of a relationship is therefore a 'parting of the ways' as we go in separate directions.

The idea of connection applies to other relationships of course, and our lovers, friends, family etc. can also join us in our container to form a unified entity. Being 'in' a relationship means 'sharing the same space' and being 'close' to one another. Such concepts explain why we think of good relationships as being close to someone and as warm. Physically the two things are linked, since proximity entails warmth and is reflected in our perception that friendship and love are indications that we are close to someone. A corollary of this is that when we describe someone as emotionally 'cold' or 'distant' we indicate emotional distance conceptualised in terms of physical distance. However, due to the association of love with sex, and sex with physical proximity, we normally assume that we are closer to the person with whom we indulge in sexual relations than we are to our friends or other family members i.e., physical closeness and emotional closeness are assumed to go together. Friends and family can join us in our containers therefore, but we are normally assumed to be 'closest' to our sexual partner.

The 'Love is Connection' metaphor can also explain the other metaphors noted above; our feelings of being 'drawn' or 'attracted to' someone implies 'Love is a Physical Force', but also involves the notion of wanting to connect physically to the source of the attraction. Similarly, the 'Love is Madness' metaphor suggests that, in this case, the physical attraction leads to a need for connection which is taken to excess. (Both of these are also connected to another concept namely 'Love is Loss of Control', to be discussed below.) The idea of 'connection' therefore has a physical basis which gives rise to our thinking about relationships as 'containers' and

‘substances’. Thus, when we ‘fall out of’ love, or friendships, we are no longer ‘in’ that emotional state, and no longer share the same container as our former lovers or friends. They return to their own containers and are separated from us physically.

The ‘Love is Connection’ metaphor also explains why we often conceive of relationships as partnerships in which we work together with another person. This is a result of our perception that we put time and effort into relationships and that they are valuable. Lakoff and Johnson note that metaphors are ‘culturally grounded in our experiences of material resources’, and that the amount of ‘labour’ we put into something ‘is proportional to the amount of the product’ (1980:65). Similarly, we see ourselves as ‘working at’ relationships, as if they are puzzles which we solve together, and this explains our perception that sometimes things ‘don’t work out’. Usually we see ourselves and our partner, friend etc. as jointly responsible for the outcome; however, if one or other does more of the relationship ‘work’, or tries harder to ‘solve the puzzle’, we see the other person as being responsible for its failure. A corollary of this is that when we love someone more than they love us, we may have to do more of the work, and we perceive them to have power over us. In these situations, we can say that Love is Loss of Control, to explain such modes of thought as ‘falling’ for someone, and which is related to the Love is a Physical Force Force metaphor, and the Love is Madness metaphor; both can be linked to the idea of being out of control i.e., we can be ‘magnetized’ by or ‘crazy’ about someone.

If ‘Love is Connection’, we can also make the reverse assumption, i.e., falling ‘out of’ love involves separation, as noted above. In addition, the idea of separation can also account for transitional states such as the stage where a relationship begins to fail. For example, the ‘Love is a Patient’ metaphor implies an impending separation; we do not usually want to remain close to someone who is ‘unhealthy’. If ‘recovery’ is

not possible, then we break the connection, or we are separated through ‘death’ and the relationship ends. Similarly, falling ‘out’ of a close relationship can lead to the opposite extreme; ‘Hate is War’, and in cases where a relationship deteriorates to the extent that it becomes hostile, we can incorporate this in a ‘War is Separation’ concept. When we ‘fall out’, we engage in arguments which, Lakoff and Johnson claim, are partially structured in terms of our conceptualisation of war, and people engaged in arguments can ‘defend their position’, ‘are attacked’ and can ‘win’ or ‘lose’. The container metaphor is now invoked to reflect our sense that we are separated from the person who once shared our space, and must defend ourselves against them. Arguments which arise from ‘falling out’ with someone thus derive from a ‘War is Separation’ metaphor; we are now on opposite sides, and our respective friends often join forces with us (become our allies) against a former partner i.e., they ‘take sides’.

It is apparent therefore that the themes of connection and separation are linked to our metaphorical thinking about love, and have a physical basis. Being physically close to someone involves emotional closeness; when we become emotionally separated, we also become physically separated. Thereafter, any physical contact with someone with whom we are ‘at war’ has the potential to hurt us physically, and explains the emotional ‘hurt’ which we suffer when a relationship is in difficulties or ends. These are the ways in which we conventionally think about relationships; good relationships are close, warm and shared, reflecting our perception that we are connected and sharing the same space. In this respect, Joel’s attitude to relationships differs from the norm, and it is now possible to consider his somewhat unusual mind - style.

Fowler's concept of 'mind-style' refers to the way in which consistent linguistic patterns in a text can build into an impression of a character's thinking mind, the way in which he or she perceives the world, as discussed in Chapter Three. Semino and Swindlehurst (1996) discuss the way in which mind-style can be combined with the theory of cognitive metaphor discussed above. In their discussion of Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, they argue that the impression of the narrator's 'idiosyncratic' world-view results from the unusual metaphorical concepts which structure his thinking (1996:143). Semino and Swindlehurst argue that

what we call "reality" is the result of perceptual and cognitive processes that may vary in part from person to person; thus individuals may differ in their conceptualizations of the same experience. (1996:144)

In Joel's case, the metaphorical concepts which structure his thinking are recognisable but distorted, as a result of his early relationship with his mother. The Love is War structure underpins his thoughts about relationships, and has further consequences; relationships entail separation rather than connection. The 'container' metaphor is particularly useful in explaining Joel's typical attitude to relationships. Joel's suspicion that women will attempt to control and manipulate him (his 'paranoia'), results in his determination to ensure that physical closeness does *not* equal emotional closeness, but emotional distance. Joel wants to remain separate within his own container, which, in itself is not unusual; many people want to retain their freedom even when engaged in a relationship. What *is* unusual however, is Joel's continued infidelity even though sex is 'no more important than sneezing'. Joel's apparent disinterest in sex ('he'd rather be jogging round the block') and his perception that 'it's the first step in getting to know someone' (p.98) is the reverse of our usual expectation. The prospect of sex with someone to whom we are attracted is exciting, but conventionally we get to know someone *before* we have sex with them.

This is linked to the notion of trust; traditionally, we become emotionally close to someone and trust them before becoming physically close, hence Becka's uncertainty and loss of self esteem is linked to her appearance; her image of herself under Joel's gaze while she is asleep is evidence of her loss of trust in him, and loss of confidence in herself. Our 'connection' is on both the emotional and physical level, in conventional thinking about monogamous relationships. Infidelity, therefore, is assumed to be a result of sexual attraction which cannot be resisted, linked to the 'Love is a Physical Force' metaphor noted above. In this case, the emotions may not necessarily be involved, apparent in the 'one-night-stand' which appears to typify Joel's behaviour. Joel, however, views his sexual relationships with other women with apparent detachment, lacking even physical attraction; they fail to provide the excitement aroused in him by food, for example (c.f., 'the sense of challenge, the mounting excitement, the triumph', p.89). The unusual nature of Joel's mind style can be discussed in terms of the binary opposites which structure his thinking, as discussed in section 6. 5 above. Women in Joel's mind are associated with the semantic field of food and animals, thereby explaining the adjectives used to describe their physical appearance, and the emphasis on the sensations which their bodies and body parts have on Joel (i.e. his egocentric tendencies which desire connection and satisfaction on a physical level). However, the paranoia which is also a part of his personality demands separation from women on an emotional level, due to his mistrust of their motives. This can be seen in the way in which the 'masculine' domain of war, and its associated aspects contaminates Joel's thoughts of relationships. In order to explore this more fully I will consider Joel's metaphorical concepts in relation to our conventional ways of thinking about relationships. First however, I have noted that Joel sees women as different from himself, as animal-like

and close to nature. This is apparent in the following memory of his early relationship with Becka;

He'd enjoyed trying to educate her, and she'd gotten into it to parrot him or please him. What a mistake. (pp.95/96)

If we analyse the metaphor in connection with Lakoff and Johnson's argument, we can see that the source domain (domestic pets) is mapped onto the target domain (Becka); the assumption of common ground in Joel's mind being that Becka and parrots cannot think for themselves, but are capable of mimicry. However, there is an anomaly, in the introduction of an additional source domain (education), which is in itself a metaphor. Pets cannot really be educated but can be trained to behave as their owners want them to behave. Women by contrast can not only be educated but can think for themselves and argue i.e., they are not controllable in the same way as pets, hence Joel's realisation of his 'mistake'; the element of control is the element which is not shared between the Becka and parrots. This is the major problem which leads to Joel's paranoia; the uncontrollability and unpredictability of women leads to contamination of his thoughts with images of war, ranging from the relatively unthreatening realm of games, to images of struggle and violence. Joel's inability to see women as anything other than different, leads him to approach all relationships with women as if they are contestants or opponents. For example, his thoughts during his approach to Amelia utilise a game metaphor;

It's a mistake to begin by putting them down. (p.97)

(sympathy is) a useful ploy: if they feel sorry for you how can they turn you down? (p.97)

Here the two aspects of Joel's thinking become apparent; he sees himself as different and separate from women, as is evident in the pronoun 'them', used to refer

to women as a unified group. In addition, his thinking implies that he sees Amelia as part of the opposition, and his approach to her as being dependent on his skill ‘it’s a mistake to begin by putting them down’. Joel’s perception of his difference from women (‘them’) and his desired ‘dominance’, as illustrated by his reference to ‘putting them down’, are linked to aspects of masculine identity already discussed, and are explained by his childhood experiences. Joel remains separate and demands that others provide for his needs but prevents them from becoming ‘close’ to him emotionally. Figure 8 shows the way in which Joel’s conceptualisation of his relationship with Becka may be compared with conventional thinking.

Figure 8: Comparison of Conventional and ‘Contaminated’ Source domains in *Uglypuss*, Joel’s Section

Metaphor	Source Domain Conventional	Source Domain ‘Contaminated’	Ground
Maybe she did this on purpose to get at him (p.86) He never knows what angle she’ll be coming at him from (p.87) She won’t get to him that easily (p.102) She knows exactly how far she can go (p.102) Finally he knows she’ll stop at nothing (p.103)	partnership	War/territory	Share space with partner Protect space from enemy
Every move to encircle him, pin him down, only makes him more desperate to escape (p.95)		War (enemy territory)	Escape/return to own territory
Leaving it up to her has always been one of his best tactics. It drives her mad. (p.92)	Partnership Work together to achieve mutual aims	War (Game)	Strategy to defeat enemy/opponent, achieve own aims
She dodges his question (p.90)		War (weapon)	Tool to aid victory against opponent
He couldn’t stand to have love and fidelity extracted from him, like orange juice or teeth. No squeezers, no pliers. (p.)	Partnership/ share resources	War (torture)	Painful extraction of resource (information) from unwilling victim
He pictures Becka’s body which she always holds back as the clincher (p.)		War/Contest	Strategy to win
He’d push her too far and she’d blurt things out, things she couldn’t retrieve		Contest/Game	Skill needed against opponent

In Joel's conceptualisation of their relationship, Becka is perceived as attempting to get 'at/to Joel' and he is intent on keeping her away (she can only go 'so far'). In addition, whereas we conventionally conceptualise love as a 'journey' which we take together, travelling in the same direction, Joel's thinking suggests that he perceives Becka as 'travelling' separately and towards him; 'she knows how far she can go'. Becka's actions in Joel's flat result in his realisation that he has underestimated her capacity for revenge: she 'goes further' than expected to 'get at him', represented in his thoughts as 'Finally he knows she'll stop at nothing' (p.103).

There are some apparently contradictory metaphors; Joel wants to 'protect his territory' but he also wants to escape. They are however consistent, since Joel wants to remain within *his own* container/refuge i.e., remain separate from Becka, and he perceives her to be intent on capturing him in order to trap him within *her own* container; hence the image of 'imprisonment', ('Forty years of the same thing, night after night', p.95). Joel also sees Becka's sighs as a potential trap, something which she uses to trick him. As a result, words become weapons, items which he throws at Becka to make her keep her distance e.g., 'She dodges his question' (p.90). The idea of language as a 'weapon' which Joel uses against Becka is an aspect of their relationship which is reinforced in Becka's section, and will be discussed below. However, if language is a weapon in Joel's hands, it is perceived to be an instrument of torture in Becka's, as is evident in Joel's speculation that she mispronounces words on purpose, for example, 'mutilating' the word 'bourgeois' to 'get at him' (p.86). This perception can be seen as a premonition of Becka's actions with the cat; she sprays it with boot waterproofer and places it in a bag in order to 'get at Joel'. In Joel's mind, Becka is an enemy from whom he must remain separated in order to avoid being hurt, a perception which is apparent in images of wounding and torture in his thoughts;

He couldn't stand to have love and fidelity extracted from him, like orange juice or teeth. No squeezers. No pliers. (p.99)

Becka's stealing of Uglypuss is evidence that she has 'gone too far' and has succeeded in hurting Joel, apparent in the images of pain in Joel's thoughts, i.e., she 'knows just where to slide in the knife', the 'full implications' of which 'will hit him tomorrow' (p.103). Joel's thinking therefore illustrates the way in which Becka has been transformed into the enemy who must be kept at bay. His attitude towards his relationship with Becka has changed from a conventional view, to one which is the reverse of what we normally expect. We usually perceive ourselves to be on the 'same side' as our partner, and we support one another against opponents. Joel, by contrast, sees Becka as his opponent and someone who must be defeated. By using a 'tactic' that results (metaphorically) in insanity ('it drives her mad'), Joel in effect eliminates his opponent, since his thoughts reflect his lack of respect or understanding of the 'emotionally disturbed' people with whom Becka works, and he describes them as 'loonies' (p.95). His 'tactic' has succeeded, since by the end of the story, Becka includes herself in the 'emotionally disturbed category' (p.109). Joel's relationship with Becka is therefore perceived in terms which indicate its degeneration from a dialogue (p.87), through the argument/contest stages, to all-out 'war'. This in itself does not produce an impression that Joel's thinking is unusual, since any relationship which is in difficulties and is increasingly argumentative may be conceptualised in a similar way. However it becomes apparent that Joel perceives of *all* relationships in these terms, and was noted above in relation to the landlord. Joel perceives him to be acting only to 'spite' Joel, and therefore Joel refuses to move. Becka's perception that Joel has been 'antagonising', the landlord suggests that it is Joel himself who is responsible for his unhappy social relationships. His tendency to mistrust people's

motives is evident in the fact that all actions are viewed by Joel with suspicion, including the vitamin pills Becka which Becka used to ‘foist on him, threatening him with beri-beri, constipation and scurvy if he dodged.’ (p.88). The emphasis on ‘moves’, ‘tactics’, and ‘ploys’, suggests that Joel sees all women as opponents, adversaries, or enemies, from whom he must escape, ‘without being caught: no sticky flypaper here’ (p.101).

By contrast, Becka’s view of relationships is typified by metaphors realising a Love is Loss of Control conceptualisation, as a result of the contaminating effect of Joel’s view of relationships. Joel’s perception that all relationships are battles for control, and his insistence on protecting his own ‘space’, is responsible for Becka’s loss of confidence and her metaphorical representation of their relationship, as can be seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Comparison of Conventional and ‘Contaminated’ Source Domains in Uglypuss, Becka’s Section

Metaphor	Source Domain Conventional	Source Domain ‘Contaminated’	Ground
Why should she have all the grief? Let him have some for a change (p.106)	Partnership		Share resources
She’s invested so much suffering in him (p.108)	Partnership/Business		Invest resources
She would like to feel inhabited again (p.107)	Partnership/property		Share space
He could accuse her of intruding on his privacy		Territory	Protect space from invasion by outsider/enemy
This was a bad move, you weren’t supposed to compare (p.104)		Game	Skill needed against opponent
He’d push her too far and she’d blurt things out, things she couldn’t retrieve. (p.108)		Game/contest	Skill needed against opponent (loss of control)
She’d be clutching at a straw		drowning	Inadequate survival aid

The conventional partnership structure based on connection and sharing is evident in Becka's thinking, and in the examples noted above with regard to Becka's perception that the relationship 'could work out' if Joel would 'only try' (p. 104). Becka's thoughts include a memory of a conversation with Joel in which he said that 'he wanted to share his life with her'; however, her thoughts 'now' show her realisation that 'he never said he wanted her to share her life with him' (p.108), aspects which can be related to the container metaphor noted above; Becka is no longer invited in to share Joel's space, and he does not want to share hers. Thus the notion of relationships as shared, as partnerships in which people are connected, also becomes contaminated in Becka's mind, and the relationship becomes a source of pain, not pleasure. Normally, the 'substance' which is the product of a relationship is beneficial, such as happiness. Becka's 'profit' however is 'grief' (p.106), just as her 'investment' is 'suffering' (p. 108). 'Let him have some' (i.e., 'grief'), reflects the investment/product structure of our traditional mode of thought, but is distorted, since we do not normally profit from grief, nor is it something which we willingly take our share of. Becka's realisation of this is illustrated by her comparison of unhappiness with drugs (p.108). Like drugs, pain and anger produce an 'adrenalin high', preferable to the 'flat grey fatigue' of withdrawal symptoms (p.109).

The contrast between Joel's and Becka's ways of thinking is also apparent in Becka's desire to share; she wants to 'feel inhabited again', to share her space, she's 'had enough of solitude' (p.105). However she is also aware that Joel has a different view, and recognises his desire to remain separate; 'he could accuse her of intruding on his privacy' (p.104).

The remaining metaphors shown in Figure 9 reflect Becka's growing loss of control. In Joel's section, the emphasis on ploys and tactics related to his

conceptualisation of relationships as contests, or games, utilise a similar structure to our thinking about war. In Becka's section, the container metaphor and the game metaphor are combined; Joel can 'push' Becka away (from his container/territory), but this makes Becka go 'too far' and drop things, i.e., 'make clumsy mistakes' and 'blurt things out'. This reflects Becka's inability to control her own behaviour, and suggests a contest between two unequal opponents. As a player, Becka is clumsy and inept, 'dropping' words and unable to finish a game in which Joel has made up the rules (e.g. 'she never came to the end of what she had to say' p.108, 'you weren't supposed to compare', p.104).

The partnership structure which underpins Becka's thoughts about relationships is affected by her relationship with Joel in other ways. Her perception that she has done more than her share of the relationship work results in her desire for someone who would be grateful to her, again reflecting her loss of self-esteem.

She'd take a divorced one, an older one, someone who could only get it up for kinky sex, anything, as long as he'd be grateful.(p.107)

Related to this is Becka's perception that, for her, time is running out. Lakoff and Johnson argue that we perceive of time as a 'limited resource', and a 'valuable commodity' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:65). This is linked to Becka's view of relationships as an 'investment'; the older she gets, the more her looks will alter, and the less likely she is to find another partner.

Tonight she feels dingy, old. Soon she will start getting into the firming cream; she will start worrying about her eyelids. Beginning again is supposed to be exciting, a challenge. Beginning again is fine as an idea, but what with? She's used it all up; she's used up. (p.107)

Becka's appearance is perceived by her as a crucial resource which will help her to find another man; however, due to the emphasis in our society on women's youthful appearance, her resource is being 'used up'. The perception of women's

looks as a commodity is reinforced by Joel's tendency to over-emphasise women's appearance, and his scrutiny of Amelia's face (p.99), as noted in section 6. 2 (i). In this respect, Joel's thinking is not altogether unusual, since society tends to emphasise certain aspects of women's appearance to gauge attractiveness. The fragmentation of women into collections of body parts is often cited as a feature of pornography, but it is also apparent in advertising, for example. Women are invited to scrutinise their skin, hair, eyes, mouths, etc. in order to compare them with the 'perfect' results that might be achieved with cosmetics. The function of such advertising is to create insecurity in women in order to ensure a demand for their products. Joel's and Becka's thinking thus illustrates their differing perspectives on women's appearance; Joel scrutinises Amelia's face for defects and signs of ageing, whereas Becka realises that she is vulnerable to the effects of age. The difference between men who look and women who are looked at is apparent in Becka's perception that Joel's body belongs to him alone, whereas Becka's body can be looked at and commented on.

He pictures Becka's body, which she always holds back as the clincher, which is what he calls lush and she calls fat. (p.90)

Becka's age is a source of insecurity, due to Joel's emphasis on women's appearance and his continued infidelity. In this respect, Becka's teasing of Joel's baldness may be seen as a tactic, an attempt to undermine his confidence in his own appearance. Becka's uncertainty and decreasing confidence in herself therefore partly arises from her suspicion that Joel may be comparing her appearance with that of other women, and at a time when she is at her most vulnerable.

She thinks of herself lying with her eyes closed and her mouth slack and open. Did he remember what she looked like at those moments, when he was with others? (p.107)

The contrast between 'looker' and 'looked at' may explain the importance placed by women on emotional connection as well as physical connection. While we

are awake we are aware of the possibility of being scrutinised and can prepare ourselves, something which is not possible when we are asleep. That Joel probably does look at Becka at these times is apparent in his perception of Amelia's 'relaxed mouth' after sex (p.100).

However, Becka realises that the type of man who would be 'grateful' is not likely to be a successful partner either;

Why should such a man be any different from the rest? They're all a little damaged. (pp.107/8)

This relates to our perception that relationship work should be shared, and that although someone who is 'damaged' might be 'grateful', they will be unable to work, a view which is reflected in Becka's perception that she would be 'clutching at a straw' (p.108). i.e., something which cannot help her.

If Joel's infidelity causes Becka to doubt her physical attractiveness, her confidence in herself is further eroded by their verbal exchanges. Joel's attitude has already been noted with regard to his perception that he has not really 'educated' Becka, she can only 'parrot' him. In addition, the conflict between their respective mind-styles means that the conversations between Joel and Becka are turned into battles, and words become weapons. This is apparent in Joel's attitude, revealed in his section; he 'doesn't believe in pulling punches. And if you punch, they punch back', and was noted above in connection with the fact that Becka has to leave her job because 'he was so good at that bullshit, the end result of which was that she'd been out of a job and he hadn't.'(p.109). Thus Joel is able to achieve his objective - the 'end result'. Becka's perception that Joel would 'accuse' and 'criticise' her for questioning him about his affairs reflects his aggressive stance (p.104) since accusations and criticisms are a confrontational use of language. Joel's view of relationships therefore becomes incorporated into Becka's view of her relationship with Joel, contaminating

her mind and damaging her confidence. As Lakoff and Johnson note, 'People in power get to impose their metaphors' (1980:157). Becca is obliged to occupy the role of opponent, and like his mother, Becca 'wins'; the cat is the winning pawn. However, both Joel and Becca are wounded; Joel is 'mad with grief' (p.110) and Becca's heart bleeds. The 'mean' person that Becca has become has won the game, but the 'nice' person she once was has been defeated.

6. 8 Conclusion

The internal perspectives of the two characters allow the reader to understand the reasons for their actions. Aspects of Joel's 'personality' which I have termed his egocentricity and his paranoia are explained by his childhood memories. In this respect, his more unpleasant tendencies, such as his apparent inability to relate to women as individuals, and his refusal to consider Becca's feelings about his infidelity, may be excused as a result of his faulty emotional development. In addition, his affection for his cat and Becca's subsequent actions may be factors in eliciting sympathy for him, particularly since he is not deliberately cruel in the way that Becca may be seen to be.

Becca's thoughts reveal the way in which she has been affected by Joel's attitude to personal relationships, to the extent that she becomes uncertain and lacking in confidence, and eventually 'mean'. Her act of revenge is therefore understandable from Becca's point of view, since she is forced to behave uncharacteristically in order to hurt Joel as much as she has been hurt. Both characters therefore act in ways which can be condemned, yet the internal perspectives of both provide information about the reasons for their behaviour. The fact that Joel's section comes before Becca's section may have an effect on the way her section is read, depending upon the reader's response to his characterisation. The fact that his section is longer than Becca's allows

more information to be revealed about his thoughts, which does not necessarily work in his favour, since the internal perspective illustrates a mind-style which is unusual. This complicates the analysis, since the suggestion that readers' sympathies are inevitably linked to internal point of view does not necessarily apply in those cases in which the character or Reflector is revealed to be unreliable or abnormal in some way. Joel's reliability is something which is difficult to determine, due to the fact that the perspectives of both Joel and Becka are provided. For example, does Joel's perception of Becka as an opponent cause her to act in the way that she does, or is she, in fact, a manipulative person? An example of this was noted in Joel's perception that perhaps Becka 'mutilated' the word 'bourgeoise' in order to 'get at him'. That Becka is capable of behaving cruelly in order to 'get at' Joel is evident in her stealing of the cat, and lends an element of credibility to his perception. Therefore, despite the fact that I have argued that Joel is responsible for Becka's subsequent actions, it could be argued that Joel is a potential victim, and that Becka is capable of using violence to hurt him. This is a reading that is less well supported, due to the information provided by Joel's memories, and his feelings of betrayal and mistrust which also appear in his attitude to other relationships.

In addition, my reference to feminist theories of gender identity and issues concerning Joel's relationship with his mother highlight the importance of the activation of feminist codes. Knowing that Atwood is a feminist writer predisposes me to assume that the clues about Joel's faulty development, while allowing me to understand his attitudes, do not however prevent me from sympathising more with Becka. This is despite my disapproval of her actions against an innocent third party, namely the cat. For these reasons, responses to this story are likely to be complex, due to the fact that the perspectives of both characters are presented, and both behave

badly. It is likely therefore that readers will sympathise with, or condemn, the characters according to their judgement of the severity of their actions, and to what extent they feel that their behaviour can be condoned in accordance with the extenuating circumstances outlined above i.e., depending upon whether Joel's infidelity is seen to be responsible for Becka's act of revenge, or whether her possessiveness explains his infidelity. Similarly, Becka's act of revenge may be seen as uncharacteristic and understandable, due to her powerlessness to change anything about her situation, or may lend credence to Joel's perception of her as manipulative and potentially violent, her actions merely being seen as the unjustified actions of a jealous and possessive woman.

Due to the complex nature of characterisation, the format of the questionnaire used in the comparative study is different from that used in the preliminary study; readers answered in accordance with a sympathy scale, thus compounding the different potential responses to the characters. For this reason, my hypothesis concerning potential responses will be outlined at the beginning of the next chapter during the discussion of the questionnaire format.

Chapter Seven Results of the Comparative Study: Readers' Responses to Atwood's *Uglypuss*

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the responses of readers to the short story *Uglypuss* analysed in Chapter Six. Before continuing, I will summarise the main points of the analysis and make reference to the results of the preliminary study, spelling out the implications for readers' responses.

In the process of analysing the story, I concentrated on those aspects of the text which I argued are important in assessing the characters' 'personalities'. These include Joel's relationship with his mother and the Amelia incident, which were used to explain and illustrate his attitudes, and Becka's feelings of uncertainty about herself and her act of revenge, which explain and illustrate her feelings. I noted in my discussion of the preliminary study that participants often referred to the same elements although they were often selected to support differing interpretations. It does not seem particularly problematic therefore to focus on selected aspects in this way, since the responses of the participants can be compared and contrasted with my own reading and with those of the other participants.

In *Uglypuss*, the narration via the two Reflectors means that their relative perspectives are in competition, since both have somewhat different perceptions of the same events. The review of the literature in Chapter Three illustrated some of the problems in assuming that an internal point of view results inevitably in sympathy for a character whose point of view is privileged. The situation is particularly complicated in situations where a character's perceptions of people and events may be considered in any degree unreliable. In these instances, the very closeness to the character's point of view means that the reader must 'stand back' and evaluate the reliability of the

narration. This was noted in relation to *Lappin and Lapinova*, where Rosalind's perception of Ernest remains uncorroborated. In my analysis of *Uglypuss*, I argued that certain aspects of Joel's characterisation (his 'egocentricity' and his 'paranoia') render his perspective to some degree unreliable. In particular, Joel's rather unusual mind-style and paranoid tendencies are factors which may render his perception of people and events suspect. In addition, I argued that Becka's version of events as revealed in her section offers an alternative point of view, which supports my interpretation of Joel's 'personality'. Becka's mind-style reveals a more conventional view of relationships which is more reliable than Joel's, and the erosion of her self-confidence is a direct consequence of Joel's infidelity, i.e., his behaviour causes her to doubt her mental and physical capabilities, and results in her act of revenge.

As a result of these factors, responses to this story were more difficult to predict than was the case with the preliminary study, due to the complexity of characterisation. Rather than acceptance or rejection of the characters' viewpoints, it is possible to accept some aspects and reject others. (The range of potential responses is discussed further below.) As a result of these factors, insights into the characters' thoughts, as revealed in the participants' mode of re-telling, does not necessarily indicate a sympathetic response. Some evidence of this was found in the preliminary study, where for some readers, understanding Rosalind's point of view resulted in resistance, a direct consequence of her internal perspective. I predicted that the access to Joel's unusual mind-style especially might result in re-tellings which would exhibit some degree of resistance, a direct result of understanding the working of Joel's mind. The participants' degree of approval or disapproval, evident in instances of the B (N) mode in their re-tellings, is again considered.

In order to assess the relationship between the internal perspective, the degree of insight into the characters' thoughts and the reader's response therefore, I will again consider the narrative mode of the re-tellings. From the results of the preliminary study this can be expected to serve two purposes, illustrating:-

- a) the participant's degree of insight into the characters' thoughts and feelings apparent in the use of the B (R) + ve mode;
- b) the participant's attitude of approval or disapproval of the behaviour and actions of the characters apparent in the use of the B (N) + ve mode.

This discussion differs somewhat from that relating to the preliminary study, due to the inclusion of an additional dimension, namely, the metaphorical structures which sometimes appear in the participants' re-tellings, and which are often an important indication of their attitudes to the characters. As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, the fact that the stories deal with relationships means that readers draw on certain expectations concerning the *nature* of interpersonal relationships. Conventionally, these are expected to be reciprocal and balanced, an expectation which is evident in our use of metaphors to describe such relationships, and which I discussed as part of my analysis of *Uglypuss*. The contrast between the metaphorical structures 'Love is War' and 'Love is Loss of Control' evident in Joel's and Becka's thoughts respectively, also contrast with our conventional way of conceptualising relationships as partnerships. My reading in Chapter Six is also one in which Becka is less powerful than Joel. In connection with this aspect therefore, I will also discuss the way that some of the participants express the nature of the relationship between Joel and Becka metaphorically, which is important due to the metaphorical structuring which represents the characters' respective mind-styles. Although tangential to the point of view issues discussed so far, it is relevant in so far as it is a reflection of the way in which readers view the relationship between Joel and Becka, which may or

may not be similar to the way that the characters' thoughts reflect their view of their relationship. The third aspect of the discussion will consider therefore:-

c) the way in which the relationship is reflected in metaphorical structures (if any)

Interpretation of such matters is also dependent on two dimensions of the reader's experience, which in Chapter Five I termed 'personal experience' and 'literary experience'. While the former will obviously vary from reader to reader, the latter is more predictable in terms of the reader implied by the text. Those readers in the preliminary study who were sympathetic to either character often referred to situational constraints to explain the character's behaviour, referring also at times to their own experiences, thereby illustrating a perception of similarity between themselves and the character and/or the character's situation. However, while we all have our own expectations of what interpersonal relationships are like as a result of our personal experiences, literary experience means that certain themes will be familiar and predictable to some readers but not necessarily to all, or to the same extent. An example of this, which is related to the issue of power relationships, is the 'woman as victim' theme. The preliminary study demonstrated that some of the women participants resisted the point of view of the female character due to her perceived passivity; she occupied a stereotypical role of female subordination and powerlessness which was predictable and unattractive. This is also a potential reading of Becka's characterisation, and is not therefore a guarantee of sympathy, particularly in the case of those readers who may be overfamiliar with such themes. Similarly, although not an exclusively feminist reading, my analysis in Chapter Six is informed by theories of child sexual development and the construction of gender identities, areas which are prevalent in feminist criticism and presumably deliberately included

by the implied author. Such themes may constitute a code which will be more readily apparent to those readers who are already familiar with such issues. Linked to c) above then is the notion of narrative schemata including feminist codes, and my fourth area for consideration is therefore related to these aspects. In discussing the responses I will consider the extent to which there is

d) an apparent activation of personal and/or narrative schemata in the participants' responses, including references to feminist codes.

In the *Uglypuss* story there is a further aspect to the power dimension, since Becka's actions are directed towards a defenceless animal. Again, the reader's judgement of Becka's actions will be dependent upon the perception of her relationship with Joel. If Joel's perspective is accepted, then Becka's action is evidence of her attempt to control him and her treatment of the cat is unreasonable and unjustifiable. If Becka's perspective is accepted then her actions are uncharacteristic, an act of temporary insanity which is the result of her inability to exert any control over Joel. These two alternative readings assume an either/or position; however, the actual results reveal that responses are more mixed, and variable, as will be discussed below. Since the internal perspectives of both Joel and Becka are provided, and because each character's section has positive and negative aspects, (the balance between thought and action), then Joel's infidelity and Becka's act of revenge are weighed against their thoughts, with their actions being judged accordingly. Linked to this is the order of presentation which is also likely to affect responses to Becka's actions. These four dimensions therefore constitute a framework which will be used to consider the participants' responses.

7. 2 Method of Data Collection

The *Uglypuss* story is useful for the purposes of this study due to the inclusion of two Reflectors, and the competing points of view of a male and a female character. However, it is also rather long, and this, combined with the amount of information requested via the questionnaire, constitutes an arduous task for participants, and led me to consider reducing the length of the story. Before embarking on this study, I asked one of the participants from the preliminary study, Participant Am, for his responses to a shorter version of the story. In this edited version, the incident with Amelia was left out of Joel's section to make the two sections more comparable in length. I asked Participant Am for his opinion of the two versions of the story and found that, as expected, the information contained in the Amelia incident *did* appear to have a significant effect on his response. It contains crucial information which might affect readers' responses, and the length of the original version of the story is necessary in order to retain the author's characterisation of Joel, and to evaluate Becka's responses to his actions. I therefore decided to proceed with the original story, hoping that its length would not prove too daunting for the participants.

The data for this study were again obtained by questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was essentially the same as that used in the preliminary study, apart from the inclusion of the 'sympathy scale' alluded to in Chapter Five (see Appendix 11). Part One asked Participants for general information about sex, age, status, education, nationality and first language. This latter information was requested due to the decision to use only Native English speakers. Having readers answer questions about a story which was not written in their native language was introducing an additional variable, namely that of interpretation, the effects of which would have been difficult to assess.

Part Two asked participants to read the story and summarise the events (Question One). Again, space was provided for participants to explain their answers. They were also asked about their enjoyment (Question Two), and to describe Joel (Question Three). This was followed by the 'sympathy scale' for Joel (Question Four) which allowed readers to express responses ranging from 'very sympathetic' to 'totally unsympathetic'. Questions Five and Six similarly asked for the participants' description of Becka and to express responses ranging from 'very sympathetic' to 'totally unsympathetic'. Readers were again asked which character they thought the author had most sympathy for (Question Seven). An additional question was included which asked readers whether they thought the story had been written by a woman or a man (Q. 8), since this may elicit information concerning readers' perceptions of stereotypically male or female themes, styles of writing, and so on. In addition, I felt that readers who are experienced in reading feminist texts may be more likely to identify feminist 'clues' in the Atwood story, such as the connection between Joel, his mother and food, and would be more likely to identify the author as female. Conversely, I felt that it may be possible for some readers to assume that the author is male, due to the greater depth of information obtained via Joel's thoughts, and the potential for some readers to conflate author and narrator/Reflector roles.

7. 3 Participants

Due to the problems that were experienced by some of the first participants in the preliminary study, postgraduate students form the bulk of participants in the comparative study. This was to ensure that the responses would be from a group who had a similar level of training and who would therefore be roughly comparable in terms of reading experience. As was the case with the preliminary study however, I experienced difficulty in obtaining data due to the poor return rate of questionnaires. I

contacted M.A. students through the English, Linguistics and Women's Studies departments at Lancaster University, requesting them to either complete the questionnaires, or to return them to me later, which rarely happened. In all, at least one hundred questionnaires were issued, of which only twenty-five were completed, including that of Participant Am, already mentioned. (see Appendix 12 for Participant Profiles). The results of this study are therefore based on the questionnaire responses of these twenty-five participants, of whom fourteen are female and eleven male. The participants are coded numerically according to the order in which the questionnaires were returned, and marked with f (female) or m (male). The questionnaire proved very useful for eliciting responses, and most participants made detailed comments and generally provided more information than was the case with the questionnaire used in the preliminary study. Some of the participants who had agreed to participate further were impossible to locate, due to the fact that they had been staying in halls of residence and had moved, or had been travelling to Lancaster to attend courses and were reluctant to return. Six male and five female participants were subsequently interviewed. Included among these twenty-five participants are two members of the Stylistics Research Group at Lancaster University, whose responses were recorded during a meeting of this group at which the story was discussed (see Appendix 13 for transcription of this discussion). The responses of other members present are not included, as they are either non-native speakers of English or knew the purpose of the study prior to the discussion. Due to the problems of distinguishing the voices of different speakers in discussions of this kind, I decided not to proceed with further discussion groups but to concentrate on interviewing participants individually. I also felt that group dynamics affect responses; some speakers express more hesitation when expressing their opinions in a group situation, for example, which should not be

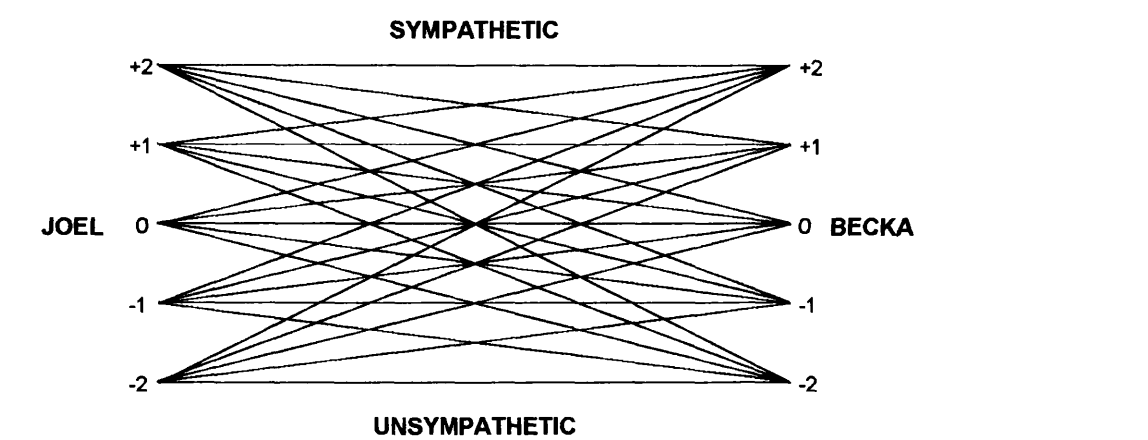
mistaken for uncertainty about their opinions of the characters. In addition, some speakers may be less able or willing to express their opinions in a group situation. Participants who discussed their responses with me individually were asked a number of questions at the interview stage which were intended to elicit information concerning personal and literary experience, (Appendix 14, Q.s.2 & 3), their perception of its realism (Q.4), the effect of the narrative presentation (Q.s 5, 6 & 7), and Becka's act of revenge (Q. 8). They were also invited to provide additional comments about the story or the task (Q.s 9 & 10). Full questionnaire and interview transcripts are included in Appendix 15)

7. 4 Potential Responses to *Uglypuss*

The range of potential responses to this story is more variable than was the case with the Woolf story, due to the greater complexity and depth of characterisation, and the wider range of available choices on the 'sympathy scale'. For this reason, rather than spelling out the range of potential responses in detail, I will illustrate the range of choices available to the readers in diagramatic form. First however, it should be noted that the word 'sympathy' has been retained in this study as being the best way of eliciting judgements from the participants. As noted in the discussion of the preliminary study, the word 'sympathy' is problematic in some respects, due to its differing associations for different readers. However, the readers sometimes comment themselves on the word 'sympathy', and use this as a foundation for explaining their response, e.g., *'sympathy's a funny word perhaps I've been too academicalised I really look at them as you know characters'*, (Participant 8f, l.99) In this way, they are able to explain their attitudes, including the degree of praise or blame attracted by the behaviour/attitudes of each character, reinforced by the opportunity to elaborate on the reasons for their answers on the questionnaire.

The more complicated nature of the ‘sympathy scale’ included on this questionnaire (Qs. 4 & 6) means that it is possible for readers to choose from a total of twenty five possible combinations to indicate their responses to the characters, combined with their own explanations of their response (see Table 6).

Table 6: Potential Responses to Sympathy Scale



The participants’ responses have been coded according to whether their response to a character is ‘positive’, i.e., indicating degrees of sympathy, or ‘negative’ indicating degrees of lack of sympathy. For example, a ‘very sympathetic’ response is coded ‘+ 2’, while a ‘totally unsympathetic’ response is coded ‘-2’. ‘No opinion’, is coded as ‘0’, and so on. In retrospect, it may have been more useful to allow the participants to choose the option ‘neutral’ rather than ‘no opinion’, as will be discussed further below. The diagram shows that each position on the five point ‘sympathy scale’ for Joel may be combined with any of the five combinations on the ‘sympathy scale’ for Becka. Thus, for example, a ‘very sympathetic’ response to Joel may be combined with a response to Becka which ranges from ‘very sympathetic’ to ‘totally unsympathetic’ and so on. To illustrate further, a ‘very sympathetic’ response

to Joel, combined with a ‘totally unsympathetic’ response to Becka, would be coded ‘+2, -2’.

Due to the internal perspectives provided, it might be expected that readers would respond in accordance with the ‘+1 = fairly sympathetic’ end of the scale for both characters (i.e., +1, +1), thereby indicating limited sympathy for both characters, due to balance between the positive and negative aspects of characterisation already discussed. In other words, the provision of internal perspectives should balance the negative aspects of characterisation for both characters resulting in a ‘fairly sympathetic’ response for both, consistent with the suggestion that access to a character’s point of view increases sympathy. However, where either the negative or positive aspects are more heavily weighted in the participants’ character evaluations, the response will become more, or less, sympathetic for one or both characters; i.e., the variable weight of the ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ aspects of characterisation will affect the reader’s overall response. Before considering this in detail, I will discuss the responses of the participants as they are recorded on the questionnaires, subsequently noting some problems with asking participants to state a ‘sympathetic’ or ‘unsympathetic’ response to such complex fictional characters.

**7. 5 Discussion of Readers’ Questionnaire Responses
 to the ‘Sympathy Scale’**

Table 7 shows the responses of twenty-three of the participants to the ‘sympathy scale’ for each character, and are expressed as percentages in Figure 10. (For a full list of the participants’ responses, see Appendix 16).

Table 7: **Combined Responses : Male and Female Participants to Uglypuss**

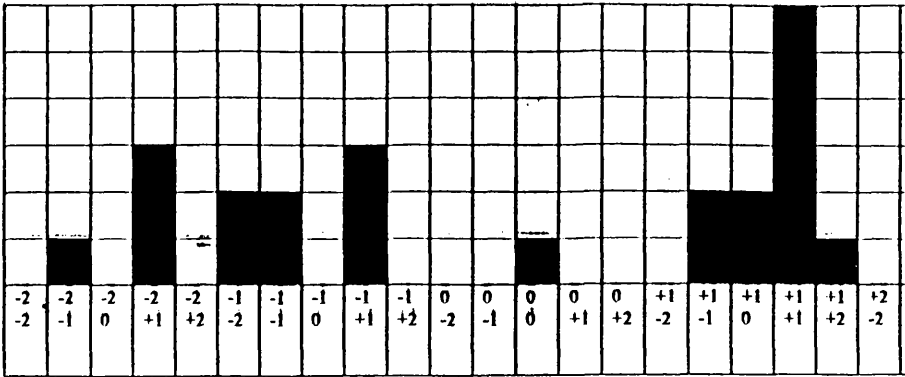


Figure 10: **Combined Responses to Sympathy Scale in Uglypuss**

Participant	Response	No.s	Percentages
+1, +1	Fairly Sympathetic to both	6/23	26.1%
- 1, +1	Fairly Unsympathetic to Joel, Fairly Sympathetic to Becka	3/23	13.1%
-2, +1	Totally Unsympathetic to Joel, Fairly Sympathetic to Becka	3/23	13.1%
+1, 0	Fairly Sympathetic to Joel, No opinion about Becka	2/23	8.7%
-1, -2	Fairly Unsympathetic to Joel, Totally Unsympathetic to Becka	2/23	8.7%
-1, -1	Fairly Unsympathetic to both	2/23	8.7%
+1, -1	Fairly Sympathetic to Joel, Fairly Unsympathetic to Becka	2/23	8.7%
+1, +2	Fairly Sympathetic to Joel, Very Sympathetic to Becka	1/23	4.3%
-2, -1	Totally Unsympathetic to Joel, Fairly Unsympathetic to Becka	1/23	4.3%
0, 0	No opinion about Either	1/23	4.3%
Totals		23	100%

The responses of two participants, 5f and 22m, have not been included in Table 7, as they both ticked more than one box for each character; i.e., Participant 5f claimed

to be ‘fairly sympathetic’ and ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to both characters, whereas Participant 22m claimed to be ‘fairly sympathetic’ and ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to Joel but ‘very sympathetic’ to Becka. Thus, their responses would have distorted the results as represented in the tables below; however, their reasons for responding in this way illustrate the problems readers experienced in expressing their attitudes to the characters, and are similar to those of some of the other participants, as will be considered in detail below. The first number below each column on Table 7 indicates responses to Joel, the second indicates responses to Becka.

As expected, the largest group of readers (six out of twenty three or 26.1%) claimed to be ‘fairly sympathetic’ (+1, +1) to both characters. However, there are also considerably more ‘unsympathetic’ responses than might be expected given the fact that internal perspectives are assumed to generate sympathy for a character. Three readers (13.1%) claimed to be ‘totally unsympathetic’ to Joel and ‘fairly sympathetic’ to Becka, and three (13.1%) claimed to be ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to Joel and ‘fairly sympathetic’ to Becka, which is predictable given those aspects of Joel’s characterisation already noted. However, there are also two readers (8.7%) who claimed to be ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to both characters, and two readers (8.7%) who claimed to be ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to Joel and ‘totally unsympathetic’ to Becka. Thus there are five readers (21.2%) who are not disposed to be sympathetic to either character. In addition, two readers claimed to be ‘fairly sympathetic’ to Joel but ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to Becka, and one reader claimed to be ‘fairly sympathetic’ to Joel but ‘very sympathetic’ to Becka.

There are also two readers who claimed to be ‘fairly sympathetic’ to Joel but expressed ‘no opinion’ about Becka. Similarly one reader claimed to have no opinion about either character. These latter responses are more informative than they appear;

all are from women participants, and are a result of Becka’s characterisation, as will be discussed in detail below. As noted, it would have been preferable to allow the participants to choose a ‘neutral’ option, since their responses are a result of the ‘balancing’ effect of the positive and negative elements for each character, not an indication that they do not have an opinion.

Since the purpose of the study is not only to investigate the effect of point of view on response but to assess the effects (if any) of sex differences, along with other variables, the responses have been further divided between male and female participants. Table 8 shows responses of male participants to the ‘sympathy scale’, and expressed as percentages in Figure 11.

Table 8: Responses of Male Participants to Sympathy Scale in *Uglypuss*

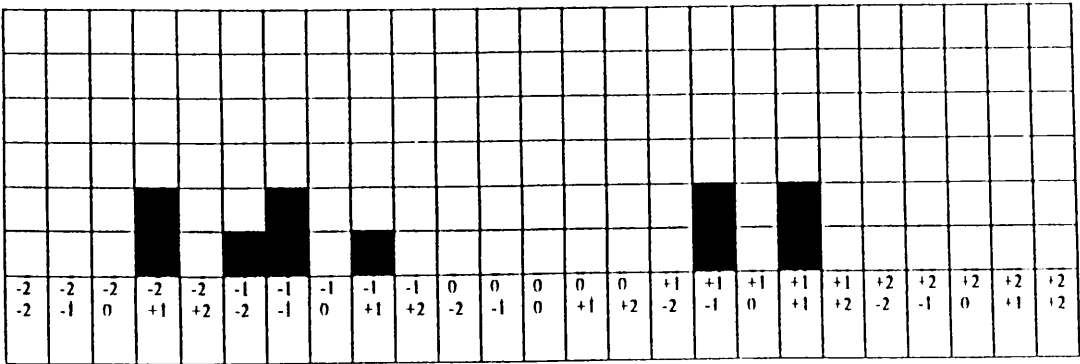


Figure 11: Responses of Male Participants to Sympathy Scale in Uglypuss

Response		Numbers	Percentages
+1, +1	Fairly Sympathetic to both	2/10	20 %
+1, -1	Fairly Sympathetic to Joel, Fairly Unsympathetic to Becka	2/10	20 %
-1, -1	Fairly Unsympathetic to both	2/10	20 %
-2, +1	Totally Unsympathetic to Joel, Fairly Unsympathetic to Becka	2/10	20 %
-1, +1	Fairly Unsympathetic to Joel, Fairly Sympathetic to Becka	1/10	10%
-1, -2	Fairly Unsympathetic to Joel, Totally Unsympathetic to Becka	1/10	10%
Totals		10	100%

The responses of the male participants appear to be fairly evenly distributed between the characters, as the percentages illustrate. If we compare this with the responses of the female participants (see Table 9) there appears to be a different pattern of response between men and women. The men appear to be slightly more sympathetic to Becka, but are on the whole more unsympathetic to both characters than are the women. The women seem to be more sympathetic to both characters, but are, on the whole more sympathetic to Becka. The total responses are expressed as percentages in Figure 12 .

Table 9: Responses of Female Participants to Sympathy Scale in Uglypuss

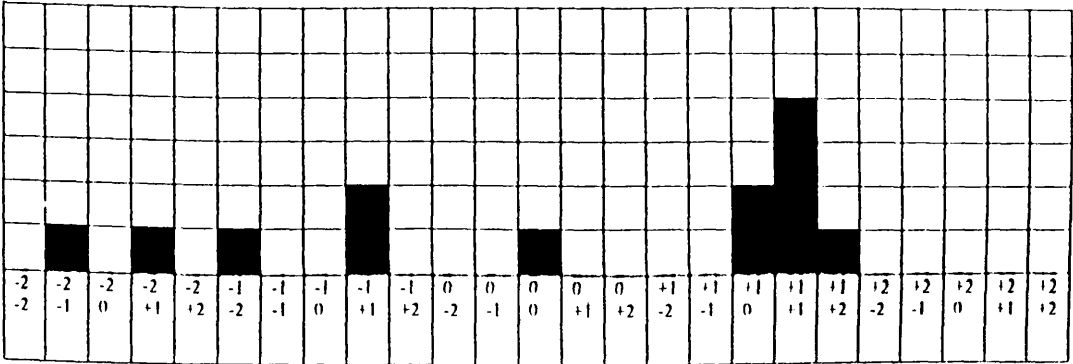


Figure 12: Responses of Female Participants to Sympathy Scale in *Uglypuss*

Response		Numbers	Percentages
+1, +1	Fairly Sympathetic to both	4/13	30.7%
- 1, +1	Fairly Unsympathetic to Joel, Fairly Sympathetic to Becka	2/13	15.4 %
+1, 0	Fairly Sympathetic to Joel, No opinion about Becka	2/13	15.4 %
0, 0	No opinion about Either	1/13	7.7%
+1, +2	Fairly Sympathetic to Joel, Very Sympathetic to Becka	1/13	7.7 %
-2, -1	Totally Unsympathetic to Joel, Fairly Unsympathetic to Becka	1/13	7.7 %
-1, -2	Fairly Unsympathetic to Joel, Totally Unsympathetic to Becka	1/13	7.7 %
-2, +1	Totally Unsympathetic to Joel, Fairly Sympathetic to Becka	1/13	7.7 %
Totals		13	100%

The differences are noticeable if we consider that the male participants are split fairly equally: total negative responses from the male participants to Joel are 60% compared with 50% negative responses to Becka: total positive responses to Joel are 40% compared with 50% to Becka. The women by comparison express a total negative response of 38.5% for Joel compared with 15.4% for Becka, and total positive responses of 53.8% for Joel compared with 61.5% for Becka. This suggests that although the women are more inclined to be sympathetic to Becka than Joel, they are inclined to be more sympathetic to both characters altogether than the men, as illustrated in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Comparison of Male and Female Responses to Joel

Male = Black, Female = Grey

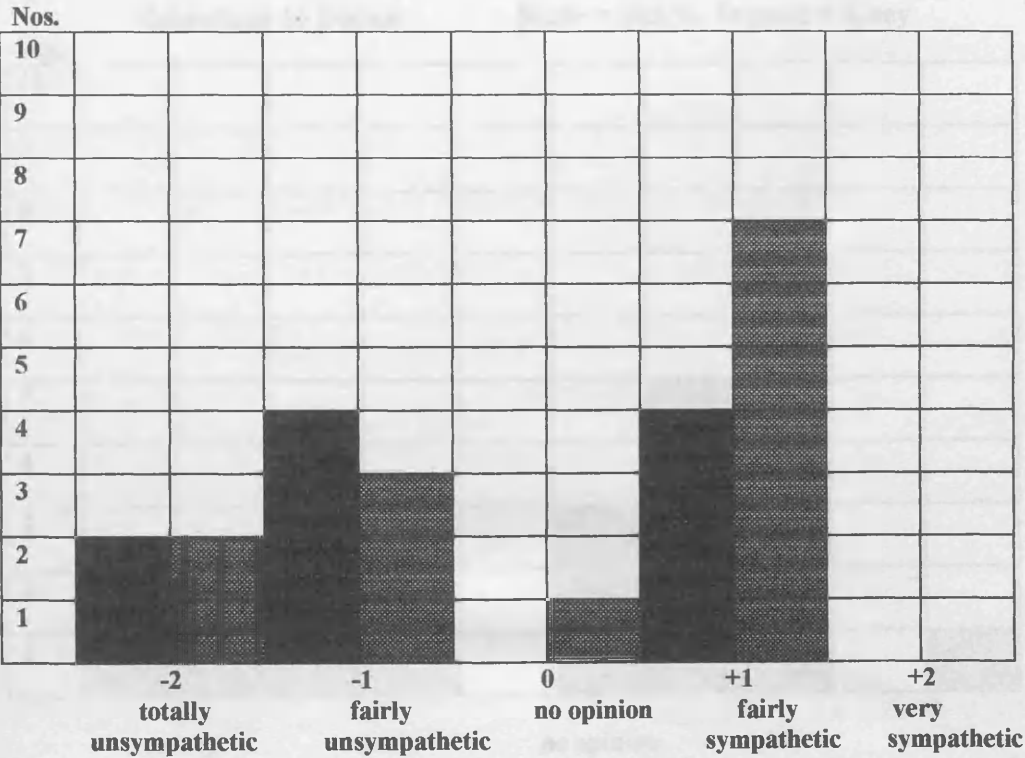
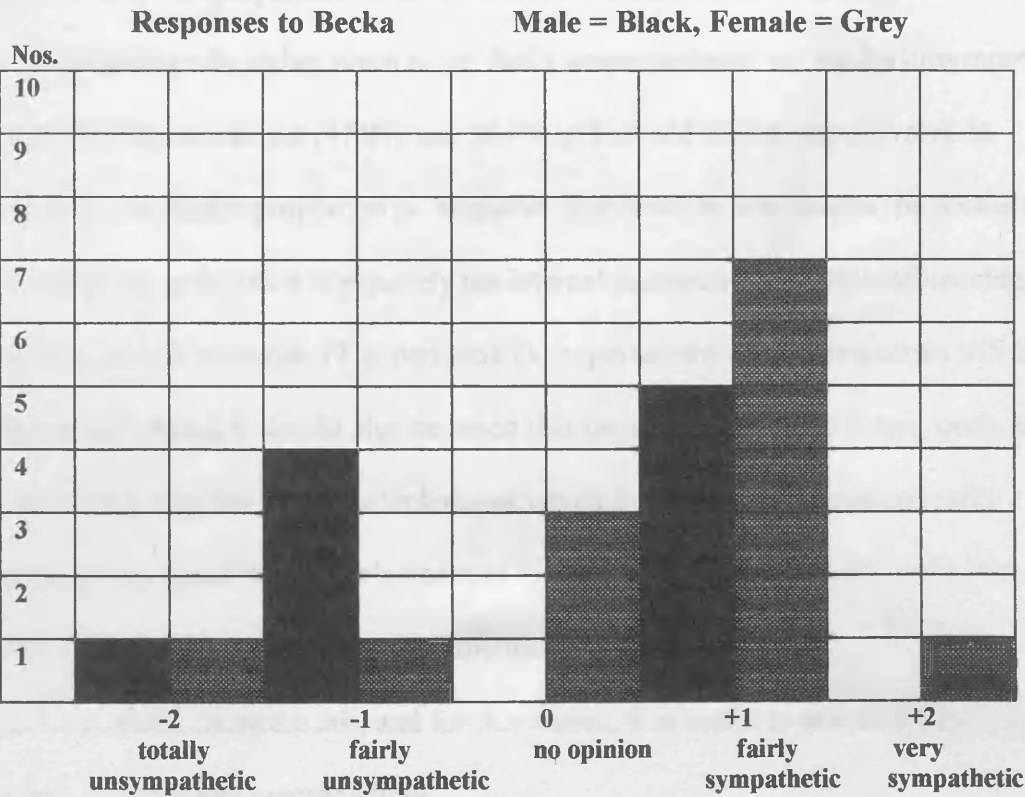


Table 11: Comparison of Male and Female Responses to Becka



Although in some respects these findings confirm expectations that readers should be fairly sympathetic to either or both characters, there are a significant number of participants who either claim to be ‘fairly unsympathetic’ or ‘totally unsympathetic’ to each of the characters (47.8% and 30.4% to Joel and Becka respectively). In addition, the higher proportion of ‘negative’ responses to Joel despite the access to his thoughts suggests that it is precisely the internal perspective which is influencing readers in their response. (The participants’ explanations of their responses will be discussed below.) It should also be noted that the readers involved in this study are very sensitive to the narrative techniques which have been employed and make assumptions about the author’s attempts to manipulate their reactions to the characters. Their reasons for responding sympathetically or unsympathetically are often explained in terms which illustrate this, and for this reason, it is useful to examine their language use to discover any contradictions.

7. 6 Discussion of Participants’ Responses:- Overview

It is apparent that the questionnaire responses are not necessarily an accurate reflection of the participants’ attitudes towards the characters, particularly with regard to those women who ticked ‘no opinion’ to the question about Becka on the questionnaire (Q. 6). For this reason, I again devised a checklist with which I could assess the participants’ responses in relation to those aspects of the story which I considered to be important factors in my analysis (see figure 13.)

Figure 13: Readers’ Responses to *Uglypuss*, Checklist

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Part	Response	IR +ve Joel	IR +ve Becka	IR +ve Joel	IR +ve Becka	BN +ve App Joel	BN +ve App Becka	BN +ve Dis Joel	BN +ve Dis Becka	ego	para	self- doubt	metaphor	kidnap
1f	0, 0		•					•	•	+		+		- Becka
Am	-2, +1	•	•				•	•		-		+	+Becka -Joel	- Becka
2f	+1, +2	•	•						•		+R	+	+Becka	
3f	+1, 0							•	•	+ -		-		
4f	+1, 0													
5f	+1, -1							•	•	+	+R -U	-		+ Becka
6m	+1, +1					•	•	•		- +	-U	-	+Becka	- Joel
7f	+1, +1	•	•				•	•	•	+	+R	-	+Joel	- Becka
8f	+1, +1	•	•					•	•		-U		+Becka	- Becka
9f	-2, -1							•	•	-	-U	-	- both	- Becka
10m	-1, -2	•						•	•				neutral	+Joel /- Becka
11m	-1, -1		•					•	•	-	-U	+		+Joel - Becka
12m	+1, +1	•	•	•	•			•	•	+	-U	+	-Becka	
13f	+1, +1	•	•		•			•		- +	-U	+		+Becka
14f	+1, +1	•	•	•	•			•		+	+R	+	+Becka	
15f	-1, -2	•	•					•	•					- Becka
16m	-1, +1	•	•					•		-	-U	+	+Becka	
17f	-1, +1	•	•					•	•		-U	+	+Becka	
18m	-1, -1		•					•	•	-	+R	+		
19f	-2, +1	•						•		-		+		
20f	-1, +1		•					•		-			+Becka	
21m	+1, -1					•		•						- Becka
22m	+1, -1 +2	•	•	•			•	•		-	-	+	+Becka - Becka	+ Becka - Joel
23m	-2, +1						•	•		-			+ Becka - Joel	- Joel
24m	+1, -1	•	•	•	•	•			•	+ -				- Becka

The participants whose responses were excluded from the tables (Participants 5f and 22m) are recorded on this checklist. Participant 5f’s response, (+1, -1,) refers to both characters; i.e., she is ‘fairly sympathetic’ and ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to both. Similarly, Participant 22m’s response is ‘+1, -1 and +2’, i.e., he is ‘fairly sympathetic’ and ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to Joel, but ‘very sympathetic’ to Becka.

Before discussing the responses in detail, I will first discuss each of the columns contained in Figure 13 and provide examples from the data in order to demonstrate the way the checklist has enabled me to categorise the participants' responses.

The checklist was completed with reference to the participants' questionnaire responses and interview transcripts, where applicable. By analysing the responses in this way, I was provided with a more complete overview of the pattern of the participants' responses. For example, I was better able to assess the relationship between the readers' use of the B (R) mode and their attitude of approval or disapproval. Columns 3-6 record the degree of insight into the characters' thoughts and feelings which the readers exhibited in their responses, evident in the presence of B (R) mode in their re-tellings. Their attitude of approval or disapproval, apparent in the use of B (N) mode, is recorded in columns 7-10. This aspect of the discussion relates to questions a) and b) above. What is interesting about being able to categorise the responses in this way is the way in which it highlights the degree of disapproval which the readers express about the characters. This is apparent even in the responses of those readers who claim to be 'fairly sympathetic' to both characters, e.g., Participants 5f, 7f, 8f, and 12m, and is irrespective of the fact that the re-tellings of Participants 7f, 8f and 12m include the use of the B (R) mode. However, this is due to the fact that other factors indicate positive responses to some aspects of characterisation. For example, columns 11, 12, 13 and 14 record any references to elements such as Joel's 'egocentricity', his 'paranoia', Becka's 'self-doubt' and her kidnapping of the cat, elements which are capable of eliciting either sympathetic or unsympathetic responses. The 'egocentricity' column (Column 11) is used as shorthand for the way in which the insight into Joel's thoughts illustrates both his concentration on his own needs at the expense of those of other people, and the

reasons why he has developed in this way. Hence, his ‘egocentricity’ is capable of increasing and/or decreasing sympathy for him. Column 11 was therefore marked either ‘positive’ or ‘negative’, (+ or -) depending on whether the reader referred to Joel’s childhood memories to explain feelings of sympathy (e.g. *‘He had an unhappy childhood’* Participant 18m, l.15, recorded as ‘+’, column 11), or to his egocentric (i.e. selfish) attitudes, which caused participants to withhold sympathy (e.g. *‘He wanted to blank out anything which didn’t fit in with his requirements / caused him inconvenience’*, Participant 18m, ls.15-18, recorded as ‘-’, column 11). Thus, if both types of response were present, the box could be marked with both positive and negative symbols.

Similarly, the box which relates to Joel’s ‘paranoia’ (column 12) was marked either positive or negative, and with an ‘R’ or ‘U’ to indicate whether or not the participant accepted Joel’s perceptions or considered him to be unreliable. This is the difference between seeing Joel as a victim of persecution, or as being responsible for the attitudes of others towards him. To elaborate, ‘+ R’ indicates that the reader refers to aspects of Joel’s ‘persecution’ to explain his or her feelings of sympathy; this is taken to be a ‘positive’ response and an acceptance of Joel’s perspective. For example, the comment *‘Because he ’s victimised ...we feel sorry for him’* (Participant 14f, l. 15), is recorded as ‘+ R’ to indicate a positive response and acceptance of Joel’s point of view. By contrast, the comment *‘Many of his problems are of his own doing, he has chosen to adopt certain attitudes’* (Participant 17f, ls. 12/13), is recorded as ‘- U’ to indicate a negative response and an implication that Joel’s perspective is unreliable. In addition, Joel’s point of view may be accepted with regard to some things and rejected in respect of others, as in the case of Participant 11m, for example, which is recorded as both ‘+ R’ and ‘- U’ in column 12. Thus, acceptance of Joel’s point of view usually

indicates a sympathetic response, rejection of his perceptions as unreliable usually indicates an unsympathetic response, and/or a degree of resistance to his version of events, although neither of these are inevitable, as will be discussed below.

Becka's lack or loss of confidence, referred to for the sake of brevity as 'self-doubt', (Column 13) can elicit either a positive or negative response, and is marked with a '+' or '-' accordingly. This is due to the fact that this aspect of Becka's characterisation can decrease sympathy for some participants, as illustrated by, for example, Participant 5f's comment, '*The martyr image in the penitential nightgown makes me unsympathetic*' (ls.34-5, emphasis in original) which is recorded as a negative response. By contrast, Participant 16m's comment that '*she is at this moment rather emotionally vulnerable. With her I feel that this is temporary*' (1.24/5) is taken to be a positive response. All of these issues will be discussed further below.

Initially I had intended to also record the way in which participants attributed blame towards the characters, in order to assess the relationship between response and causal attributions. Some of the problems associated with the application of attribution theory to the responses were discussed in Chapters Two and Five; the attributional framework becomes increasingly difficult to apply to the responses of reader to *Uglypuss*, due to the complexity of characterisation and the numerous factors capable of eliciting sympathetic and/or unsympathetic responses, although I will allude to attribution theory where relevant. Instead, I used the way in which participants refer to the relationship in metaphorical terms, which is related to the concept of a relationship schema discussed in Chapter Five.

Column 14 is thus used to record the presence of any metaphorical structures in the responses and whether or not they indicate sympathetic or unsympathetic attitudes to either of the characters, in accordance with the relationship schema. Thus

the presence of a 'plus' or 'minus' symbol is combined with the character's name to indicate the way in which the participants perceive the relationship between the characters. This is due to the fact that metaphors can be a reflection of approval of disapproval, and may reflect a perception that the power relationship is more biased in favour of a character, or that the character has put more effort into the relationship. Such contrasts can be seen in the response of Participant 22m; he comments that Becka is '*dazzled*' by Joel, a response which reflects his perception of an unequal relationship; he also comments that Joel is not '*prepared to give*', and his response is recorded as both '-Joel' and '+ Becka, indicating increased sympathy for her. Participant 22m's comments, as already noted, are influenced by his perception that Becka's act of revenge is 'understandable' and his use of metaphors reflect his 'very sympathetic' response to Becka. Therefore, '*I think she's a bit dazzled by him*' (l. 57) reflects the 'Love is Loss of Control' aspect which exonerates Becka from blame and is recorded as a positive response to Becka (i.e. '+ Becka). Examples from other participants include such comments as '*she's worked hard at the relationship and been let down*' (Participant 2f, l.18). This too is marked with a '+ Becka' in column 14, indicating that in the metaphorical structuring of this response, the participant views Becka more approvingly than she does Joel, due to the imposition of a 'partnership' metaphor reflecting a view of relationships as balanced and reciprocal. It would be possible of course to code this as '- Joel'; however, since the comment refers to Becka in positive terms ('*she's worked hard*') and only implies that it is Joel who has 'let her down', it seems more reasonable to interpret this as a positive response to Becka, consistent with her 'very sympathetic' response to the female character.

Column 15 records the way in which participants view Becka's act of revenge. Her actions have the potential to increase or decrease sympathy for *either* character

and is recorded as '+' or '-' Joel or Becka in column 14. For example, Participant 22m's 'very sympathetic' response to Becka is consistent with his use of metaphors and his reaction to her stealing of the cat e.g., '*she's really been pushed to the edge...and therefore it was sort of understandable*' (ls. 114-123, + Becka in column 15) Columns 14 and 15 are often related therefore; for example, the 'Love is Loss of Control' metaphor (*she's ... been pushed to the edge*) is combined with the perception that her act of revenge is '*understandable*', thereby reflecting Participant 22m's 'very sympathetic' response. To use another example, the comment '*How can you have any sympathy for anyone who abuses cats?*' (Participant 10m, ls.12-13), is recorded as '-' Becka' in column 15. The kidnapping has the effect of increasing Participant 10m's sympathy for Joel, since, unlike Becka, '*he cares for Uglypuss, or at least doesn't harm it intentionally*' (l.8). This response is therefore recorded as 'scoring minus points' for Becka and 'positive points' for Joel, recorded in column 15). It is worth noting at this point that some of the female participants expressed their frustration at being denied the opportunity to sympathise with Becka as a result of her act of revenge. Participants 1f and 7f are examples of this, and this aspect of the story is the main reason for Participant 1f's claim to have 'no opinion', as will be discussed below.

The recordings in Figure 13 confirm my prediction that there would be a great deal of agreement among readers concerning the central elements. Although other issues were referred to by the participants, these were often capable of being incorporated under columns 7-10 on the checklist indicating approval or disapproval. These included such aspects as reports of the characters' speech or actions, for example, '*she said and did some rotten things to him*' (Participant 5f, l.32) which has been taken to indicate disapproval of an aspect of Becka's characterisation and an

acceptance of Joel's viewpoint. Other examples include '*I feel sorry for his racial identity problems*' (Participant 5f, 1.27) which has been incorporated under column 12, since this suggests an acceptance of Joel's perspective. The way in which the participants draw from personal or literary experience, or both, to explain their responses is an aspect of the discussion which relates to question d) above, and will be considered at the end of the discussion in an attempt to explore the reasons why some participants respond more strongly than others.

Despite its usefulness, the checklist is not entirely satisfactory; firstly, it is subjective since it is based on my own decision about what elements are important factors in characterisation; secondly, I subsequently compare my own interpretation with those of the participants, and it is possible that another researcher might interpret the readers' responses differently from myself. The latter criticism can be minimised by the fact that my discussion of the participants' comments includes line numbers relating to the transcripts of their comments, and references to the column to which their responses have been related. By cross-referencing the recording in Figure 13 with the transcripts, my interpretation can therefore be confirmed or challenged. The former criticism can be answered by the fact that readers usually agree about the significant elements in a story, even though we may differ in the way that we respond to them. In its favour, the checklist allows me to see in diagrammatic form the relationship between the various elements which I have identified as important and the readers' responses, something which I would be unable to do if the readers did not themselves refer to these same elements. In addition, it is possible to discern patterns and trends which may be significant. For example, the greater degree of disapproval expressed towards Joel is evident in Column 9, with only three participants failing to express some form of disapproval (i.e. Participants 2f, 4f and 24m.) Similarly, the way

in which Becka is the character most often favoured in the participants' metaphorical structuring is apparent in Column 14; ten out of the thirteen participants whose retellings included the use of biased metaphorical structures reflect a positive attitude towards Becka. Columns 11, 12 and 15 indicate the way in which reactions to Joel's 'personality' and Becka's act of revenge are particularly mixed, whereas Column 13 indicates that Becka's apparent loss of confidence following her relationship with Joel usually results in sympathy (i.e., twelve out of seventeen participants responded in this way). There is also no obvious relationship between sympathy and blame in responses to this story as was the case in the preliminary study. However, if we consider the recordings for the participants who claim to be 'fairly sympathetic' to both characters as a whole, (Participants 6m, 7f, 8f, 13f, and 14f), it is apparent that they score more highly in the number of columns to which their response can be related. This is particularly noticeable if their responses are compared with those of Participants 10m and 23m, for example, whose 'totally unsympathetic' responses to one of the characters results in fewer factors apparently being taken into consideration. This may also be compared with the case of Participant 9f, whose unsympathetic response not surprisingly results in negative recordings in all of the columns to which it can be related. However, it is also apparent that those participants who claim to be 'fairly unsympathetic' to both characters also take a greater number of factors into consideration in their responses (Participants 11m and 18m). The participants whose responses are 'moderate', i.e. either 'fairly sympathetic' or 'fairly unsympathetic', perform a kind of 'balancing act' whereby the positive and negative aspects of characterisation for each character are considered on their own merits.

In summary then, it is apparent that, as expected, responses to this story are more complex than to the story used in the preliminary study. The introduction of an

additional Reflector offering an alternative perspective on events, combined with a degree of unreliability in Joel's perspective, gives rise to multifaceted readings, with the majority of participants reluctant to praise or condemn either character outright, but seeing certain aspects as being positive or negative features which affect their responses. Before continuing, I will consider the responses of Participants 5f and 22m, the readers who each ticked more than one box on the 'sympathy scale'. I will subsequently use their contributions as a foundation for the remainder of the discussion. I will be referring to Figure 13 frequently in order to illustrate the points I am making. References to numbered columns therefore relate to Figure 13, and line numbers refer to the questionnaire and interview transcripts included in Appendices 11 and 12. In this way, it is possible to read the full transcript of the responses to assess the overall tone of the response, and compare this with the way in which specific comments have been used to record the readers' reactions to the elements already noted.

7.7 Detailed Discussion of Participants' Responses

7. 7. (i) Participants 5f, 22m and 2f

The first point worth noting about Participant 5f's response is the fact that her re-telling takes the B (N) + ve form and indicates her disapproval of certain aspects of characterisation (Columns 9, 10). Although she does indicate approval, this relates to her enjoyment of the story itself and is not approval of the characters (e.g. ls.8-12) and is not recorded in Figure 13. By looking at the recordings in Figure 13, it is apparent that Participant 5f's response is evenly balanced in terms of positive and negative features. For example, her disapproval of both characters is balanced by positive responses to Joel's 'egocentricity' (i.e. references to his childhood, l.20, recorded as '+', column 11) and Becka's act of revenge (ls.33, 34, '+' column 14). However Joel's

perceived unreliability and Becka's 'self-doubt' give rise to negative responses (l.35, '- U', column 12, '-', column 13). This can be seen more clearly from the extract below taken from the questionnaire transcript. (Participant 5f was not interviewed.)

*I'm sympathetic because of his childhood e.g. the cooking section on p.88-89 and comments about his home pg. 95. I've ticked two boxes because my sympathies vary - at times I can see precisely why Becka ruins his flat, but I also see his point of view, especially when events are presented from his point of view e.g. Becka's comments on his 'baldness'. I'm slightly sympathetic when he gets threatening phone-call, and egg- throwing but that is mitigated by the fact that he's probably asked for it because of the nature of the street theatre *I'm very sympathetic when he realises she's taken Uglypuss* I'm sympathetic with his racial identity problems. (ls. 20-27 emphasis in original)*

Participant 5f's response fluctuates in accordance with the various aspects of characterisation; her sympathy for Joel's 'persecution' is diminished by her perception that his perspective is to some extent unreliable i.e. '*he's probably asked for it*' (l. 25, '-U', column 12). It should also be noted that she apparently accepts Joel's representation of Becka's comments on his 'baldness' as an accurate representation of Becka's speech. In my analysis in Chapter Six, I noted that Becka's characterisation in Joel's section is slightly different to that in her own, an impression which arises partly as a result of Joel's remembrances of her speech. Similarly, the sympathy which is aroused for Joel as a result of Becka's actions is again balanced by the fact that the insight into Becka's feelings following her actions also elicits a sympathetic response from Participant 5f.

My greater sympathy for her is right at the end, despite what she's done to the cat! Final 2 sentences leave me with greatest sympathy for her.
(ls.33-34, '+ Becka', column14)

Her sympathy for Becka is however undermined by the fact that her 'self-doubt' renders her unattractive; '*the "martyr" image in the "penitential night-gown" makes me unsympathetic.*' (l.35, '-' in column 13). Thus the balance between positive and negative factors is consistent with her claim that she is both 'fairly sympathetic'

and ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to both characters, and explains her reluctance to state her opinion categorically. If we compare her response with that of Participant 22m, we can see that the more positive recordings for Becka from the latter reflect his ‘very sympathetic’ response on the questionnaire.

There is an immediate point of comparison between the response of the latter participant and that of Participant 22m, due to the appearance of B (R) mode in his re-telling. This may be due to the fact that Participant 22m was interviewed whereas Participant 5f was not; however, it also became apparent during the interview that Participant 22m is, what I termed in the preliminary study, an ‘empathetic’ reader, referring to his own feelings during reading as well as to those of the characters, as did Participant Ef, a point to which I will return below. Joel’s ‘egocentricity’ (column 11) is both a positive and negative element of Joel’s characterisation in Participant 22m’s re-telling, whereas the remaining elements (columns 13-15) all favour Becka.

Participant 22m’s narrative re-telling is in both B (R) mode displaying insight into the feelings of both characters, and B (N) mode indicating approval of Becka and disapproval of both characters. In addition, he displays some uncertainty, illustrated by his use of the B (R) - ve mode to refer to Joel (column 5) which is a result of Joel’s perceived unreliability. This is apparent in his answer to question 1 on the questionnaire, where, having given his summary of what the story is about, he comments;

Mind you, whether you can say that this is what’s happening, I’m not sure. I’m undecided as to whether Joel is kidding himself (ls. 5-6)

This has not been recorded in column 12 on the diagram, since Participant 22m is ‘undecided’ about Joel’s ‘unreliability’. This may explain the appearance of B R -ve mode, for example, ‘*He seems to be right on ...He seems to like ‘control’ (l.21, 22), ‘he seems to accept the way he is’ (l.28).* Participant 22m’s response also

demonstrates some initial hesitancy when referring to Becka eg. *'her view of herself must be pretty suspect'* (1.46 questionnaire) *'her violent behaviour probably stems from a mixture of this, her love for Joel and what dignity she has left'* (1.47-48).

However, the greater commitment of 'probably' and 'must' suggest more confidence than the 'seems' which occur in the former examples.

In addition to displaying insights into the feelings of both characters, evident in his use of the B (R) + ve mode, Participant 22m also refers to his own feelings, demonstrating an empathetic style of reading and a greater depth of engagement with the story than was evident in the response of Participant 5f. This can be seen in the way in which Participant 22m links specific parts of the story to his own feelings during reading, as illustrated below.

text	<i>(the quotation) was slightly melancholy</i> (1.12/13)
feelings	<i>there was a sort of melancholy feeling that came over me almost like a sense of despair ...that touched me</i> (1.14/15)
text	<i>when she was talking about wanting to find someone else who would be...(grateful)...that word is so -I mean really sad</i> (1.21-24)
feelings	<i>I must admit I find it quite poignant</i> (1.28/29)
feelings/text	<i>I can't get over the sadness... of this last little bit here...it's so sad</i> (1.139/40)
text feelings	<i>it's like the whole thing in this last couple of pages it's almost enough to bring you to tears</i> (ls.141/142)

Participant 22m comments that it is the way in which writers portray the thought processes of their characters that interests him most (1.204/5), and it is apparent that the textual elements which appear to arouse his emotional response are those which refer to the characters' inner thoughts rather than to their actions. For example, *'the last couple of pages'* of the *Uglypuss* story portray Becka's thoughts

about Joel, the past and her future (pp.108-110). This tendency is apparent also in his use of the B (N) mode; the insight into Joel's thoughts has the potential to increase his sympathy and to reduce it. For example, he uses references to Joel's thoughts to explain his disapproval, as in the example below;

Becka's on his mind and in truth he's probably not dealing with it very well, but I don't like his attitude towards relationships (l.34-35, column 11)

However the insight into Joel's childhood memories produces a sympathetic response.

I could feel this sort of (.) erm slight (.) sense of despair from him and when he's talking about his childhood again that was really quite a sad time you know (.) that period of like longing as a kid sort of thing (.) I was really quite sympathetic (l.61-63, '+', column 11)

The way in which he concentrates on the characters' thoughts suggests a link between being able to 'transport' himself into the mind of the characters and experience their feelings vicariously, and this overrides to some extent their actions, at least in Becka's case. For example, when asked what effect Becka's act of revenge had on his feelings about her, he commented;

I found it made me feel much more strongly the despair that she was feeling when she did it (.) you know (.) what is the one thing that I can do that is going to hurt this person you know to make him feel the way I've been hurt and therefore it was sort of (.) understandable shall we say not justifiable understandable (laughs) (ls. 119-123, '+ Becka, column 15)

The phrase '*what is the one thing that I can do that is going to hurt this person... to make him feel the way I've been hurt*' corresponds to the category of direct thought, i.e., it seems to be a representation of Becka's thinking mind before she embarks on her act of revenge, and suggests an ability to 'get inside' Becka's head and understand her motivation. In addition, his 'very sympathetic' response to Becka causes him to re-evaluate his initial response to Joel's thoughts. For example, after reading Becka's section, his sympathy for Joel is reduced.

I found him much less sort of sympathetic (.) when you identify the sort of () pain (.) the parallel if you like (.) the longing (.) that was going on (.) but I mean that was a definite shift (.) I could feel that (.) I hadn't expected that (.) when suddenly you've got that little break in the middle (.) and we're seeing things through her eyes and what happened (1.70-75)

His ability to 'see things' from Becka's point of view results in his perception that Joel is 'shallow and unfair' (1.87). The contrast between the characters' thought processes suggests that Becka's apparently stronger feelings of hurt are responsible for Participant 22m's 'very sympathetic' response to her, which is a result of being able to imagine how she 'feels'. This counteracts the 'positive' effect of Joel's childhood memories and accentuates the other side of his 'egocentricity' i.e., his lack of concern for others. It is worth noting at this point that both Participant 22m and Participant 5f conflate the role of Reflector and narrator. For example, Participant 5f's comment '*he says he never pulls his punches*' (1.13) and Participant 22m's comment '*when she was talking about...*' (1.21) suggest that this kind of internal perspective allows readers to ignore or forget the intervening role of narrator and to have the impression that it is the character/Reflector who is telling the story directly.

I have already noted Participant 22m's disapproval of Joel, which is connected to Joel's attitude towards relationships (1s.34-35). He also makes some disapproving comments about Becka; however these are connected with Becka's duty to herself, rather than a criticism of her behaviour towards Joel. For example, he comments on the questionnaire that

she's responsible for some of her problems and however much Joel really thinks of her (as a person), if he's behaved in a way she doesn't like, she should go (1.54-56)

The deontic '*should*' refers to Becka's future actions rather than to her attitude towards Joel, and is similar to the way in which Becka's loss of esteem in the story is replaced by her perception of her duty to herself. In addition, Participant 22m's

disapproval of Becka is mitigated by the fact that he perceives her to be ‘*honest*’ (1.52) and ‘*more sincere*’ (1. 42) than Joel. Therefore, although I have identified the above remarks as disapproval of Becka, they are obviously less severe and less disapproving than his comments about Joel. They are also a reflection of his perception of the relationship between them, in which Becka is seen to be the person least at fault. This becomes more apparent if we consider again Participant 22m’s references to the elements which I identified in my analysis. Joel’s ‘egocentricity, as noted, elicits both sympathetic and unsympathetic responses; his childhood memories predictably arouse sympathy, whereas his expectation that others should comply with his needs, reduces sympathy from Participant 22m. Joel’s attitude is condemned as ‘*too convenient*’ (1.36, ‘-’, column 11) and Participant 22m invokes the ‘partnership’ metaphor in order to describe Joel’s behaviour; ‘*in his interactions (with women) he’s not prepared to give*’ (1.38).

Joel’s feelings are perceived to be superficial (‘*shallow*’, 1.85) compared with Becka’s ‘*pain*’ and ‘*longing*’ (1 72). The contrast between the characters’ feelings is compounded by the fact that Joel is perceived to be potentially unreliable (1.6), another factor which works in Becka’s favour. Similarly, Becka’s loss of confidence as a result of her relationship with Joel is seen to be a factor in her revenge (1.47, recorded as ‘+’, column 13. Participant 22m perceives Becka’s actions to be a result of her strong feelings; in other words, the fact that she is seen to be not responsible leads to the imposition of the ‘Love is Loss of Control’ metaphorical structure. Examples include:-

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. 42 | <i>She’s fallen for Joel in a big way</i> |
| 1.57 | <i>she’s maybe a bit dazzled by him</i> |
| 1.114 (1.113) | <i>she’s really been pushed to the edge (she’s not going to back down)</i> |

(Recorded as ‘+ Becka, column 14)

By contrast, metaphors which describe Joel's attitude, as previously noted, invoke the partnership metaphor, in which Joel is the partner in control and unprepared to do his share of the relationship 'work', for example, *'he's not prepared to give'* (l.38, '- Joel', column 14). However, this is combined with the 'Love is a Game/Contest/ War' structure which I argued in my analysis formed the foundation for Joel's thoughts about his relationship with Becka, for example:-

l.80 (Joel) *decides to take power there and then and go out*
 ls.87-88 *it's a kind of power play where he's exerting his right to do*
 something which is going to hurt her

(recorded as '- Joel', column 14)

In this case, the 'partnership' metaphor is invoked to explain Joel's intentions; conventionally, relationships are based on mutual 'give' and 'take', and we have equal 'power' i.e. we assume that our respect for one another conveys a form of power on the other person. This also explains the 'Love is Loss of Control' metaphor, which can render us 'powerless' due to the strength of our feelings, thereby conveying greater power on the other partner. The perception that Joel is able to '*take power*' is therefore based on Becka's relative powerlessness. Such a conceptualisation combines with the 'Love is War' structure, i.e., by 'taking power' Joel can 'hurt' Becka. The metaphors are consistent therefore in that they reflect Participant 22m's perception that Becka is defenceless against Joel due to the strength of her feelings for him, and explains his deontic modality concerning Becka's 'duty' to herself, i.e., *'if he's behaved in a way she doesn't like, she should go'*. (ls. 55-56). Becka is judged to be not responsible for her actions because the contrasting internal perspectives of the characters suggest that her feelings leave her powerless against Joel and out of control. These factors are responsible for (or are a reflection of) Participant 22m's 'very sympathetic' response to Becka, and his fluctuating feelings of sympathy for, and disapproval of, Joel.

The responses of Participants 5f and 22m differ therefore in the ‘weighting’ of the various positive and negative aspects of characterisation. Whereas Participant 5f’s response suggests a balance between these aspects, Participant 22m’s more empathetic response, due to his perception of the contrasting depth of the characters’ feelings, results in a more sympathetic response to Becka which is reflected in his use of metaphors to describe the relationship, and his reference to his own feelings.

Participant 2f is the only other participant to express a ‘very sympathetic’ response to Becka. Unfortunately, her comments are rather brief; however, she does demonstrate an awareness of the characters’ feelings, apparent in her use of the B (R) + ve mode. She refers to Joel’s tendency to ‘*seek solace in food*’, his ‘*struggle against victimisation*’ and the fact that ‘*he’d like to feel detached*’, all aspects which I referred to in my analysis as being related to his ‘paranoia’ and responsible for eliciting a ‘fairly sympathetic’ response from Participant 2f. In addition, she accepts his perception that he is being persecuted e.g., ‘*He’s struggling against victimisation by his landlord, an anonymous caller, Becka too, in a way*’ (ls. 10-11). However her greater sympathy for Becka is a result of the fact that she perceives her to be relatively powerless, and is reflected in her use of metaphors e.g.,

Becka is emotionally frustrated and reluctantly ‘hung up’ on Joel.

(ls 3-4)

She’s worked hard at the relationship and been let down. She is vulnerable, used by Joel and rejected constantly. (ls. 18-19, ‘+’, Column 13)

Thus, like Participant 22m, Participant 2f’s ‘very sympathetic’ response to Becka is a result of her perception that she has worked harder at the relationship than Joel.

The participants who claimed to be ‘fairly sympathetic’ to both characters form the largest group, and their responses may be compared with Participant 5f’s. This

group is comprised of Participants 6m, 7f, 8f, 12m 13f, and 14f. In their responses, as in that of Participants 5f, the various factors are taken into account, resulting in a balance between the positive and negative aspects already discussed, unlike Participants 22m and 2f, who see Becka in a more positive light and are more sympathetic to her. Thus, while many of the responses of the '+1, +1' readers differ in the way in which they interpret the various positive and negative elements, the 'balancing' effect is still in evidence in their comments. I will discuss this group of readers next, comparing and contrasting them in order to show how the balance between the different elements works in each case.

7. 7 (ii) '+1, +1 Readers' = 'Fairly Sympathetic' to both: Participants 6m, 7f, 8f, 12m, 13f, 14f.

All of the above participants exhibit insights into the characters' thoughts and feelings, although this is sometimes minimal, as in the case of Participant 6m, for example. Participant 6m was one of the participants in the Stylistics Research Group discussion which took place at Lancaster University (see Appendix 13), which may explain his tendency to re-tell the story mainly in B (N) + ve mode. Discussions of this kind may mean that participants are less inclined to discuss characters' 'feelings', and are more concerned with literary techniques. Participant 1f also took part in this discussion and her response similarly is mainly in B (N) + ve mode. A corollary of this is that Participant 6m relates to the characters primarily as fictional constructs, a tendency which is apparent in the responses of several of the participants to be discussed below, and which differs in emphasis from the response of Participant 22m for example. However, the responses shown in Figure 13 illustrate the relationship between those elements of characterisation which can be seen as negative or positive, and the mode of re-telling. By using the terms 'negative' and 'positive', I am referring to the way in which these elements are capable of eliciting expressions of disapproval,

approval, or which are used as evidence of mitigating circumstances. Disapproval for Joel is mainly as a result of the aspects of his characterisation which are related to his ‘egocentricity’, and is expressed mainly through B (N) + ve mode. These ‘negative’ aspects are counterbalanced by references to his feelings, or his childhood experiences, expressed through B(R) + ve mode (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Responses to Joel – ‘Fairly Sympathetic’ Readers

Participant/ Narrative Mode	‘Negative’ elements (Column 11)	‘Positive’ elements (Column 11, 15)
6m B (N) + ve	<i>Self-centred arrogant, knows what he believes (ls. 10-11)</i>	<i>Courageous in not adjusting his beliefs behaviour to suit people around him (ls. 10-11)</i>
7f B (N) + ve	<i>He has little real warmth towards women/others, unable to trust them His potential warmth is seen only in relation to his cat (ls. 13-15) On the surface, his attitude to women, as seen in the interlude with Amelia, repels me with its stereotypical mcp elements (ls. 21-25)</i>	<i>Enough is hinted at to arouse some pity: the unhappy childhood, the alienation from all social groups. His desire for sex only as a prelude to intimacy (ls. 21-25)</i>
8f B (N) + ve B (R) + ve	<i>He blames other people for his situation (ls. 9-10) His visualisations of Becka and Amelia are as of objects (not subjects) (ls. 11-12)</i>	<i>He regrets calling the cat Uglypuss and then is absolutely devastated to find that he doesn’t have it (ls. 48-49)</i>
12m B (N) - ve		<i>He probably went out with women who weren’t a threat to his ego because they were ‘semi-strangers’ (ls. 11-13)</i>
13f B (N) + ve B (R) + ve	<i>He is lazy and self-indulgent and somewhat selfish. He finds it hard to see things from another’s point of view, to empathise (ls. 5-7)</i>	<i>He is lonely, emotionally vulnerable and confused by the world (ls. 5-8)</i>
14f B (N) + ve B (R) + ve	<i>I don’t like the way it appears he plays with or uses women</i>	<i>but there’s no indication that he lies or misleads them so I can’t blame him totally (ls. 7-12)</i>

The way in which the participants balance the negative aspects of Joel’s egocentricity against his feelings, or with reference to mitigating circumstances, is illustrated by their comments e.g., Participant 6m balances Joel’s tendency to be ‘self-centred’ against his perception of him as ‘courageous’, Participant 7f contrasts his

'attitude' and 'lack of warmth' against the pity aroused by his 'unhappy childhood' and 'alienation', and Participant 13 f comments on his 'laziness', and 'self-indulgence' in contrast to his feelings of 'loneliness', 'vulnerability' and 'confusion'. In the case of Participants 8f and 14f Joel's attitudes to women ('objects, (not subjects)', (Participant 8f), 'he plays with or uses women', (Participant 14f), are set against his feelings of affection for his cat; he is 'devastated' (Participant 8f) and 'fond' (Participant 14f). Thus the disapproval apparent in the use of the B (N) + ve mode, is counterbalanced by references to Joel's feelings, expressed in B (R) + ve mode.

The responses of Participants 6m and 12m are slightly different from those of the other readers discussed so far, and from my own reading. Participant 6m suggests that Joel's egocentricity is a positive aspect of his characterisation, i.e., he describes him as '*courageous in not adjusting his beliefs/behaviour to suit people around him*'. Participant 6m also finds Joel the more interesting character (ls.457-458), evident in this expression of approval through B (N) + ve mode. In Participant 12m's case, his expression of disapproval is directed towards Becka, and his reference to Joel's feelings allows him to explain the reasons for Joel's egocentric behaviour e.g., '*He probably went out with other women who weren't a threat to his ego because they were semi-strangers*'. His comments suggest a different orientation to Joel's point of view from that of the other readers, and is also apparent in his perception that Becka tried to '*dominate Joel*' (l.11). I will consider the comments of Participants 6m and 12 further below in connection with the participants' use of metaphors.

For the remaining participants in this group, the elements which I have identified as producing an impression of Joel's egocentricity, are those which are also referred to as negative elements of characterisation. However, only one reader refers specifically to Joel's childhood as a mitigating factor, namely Participant 7f. She also

comments that the ‘tragedy’ of the story is partly due to Joel’s perception that Becka might betray him; (e.g., ‘Becka would, I feel, not betray him’, l.16), and is a response to the aspect of Joel’s characterisation which I termed ‘paranoia’, i.e., his tendency to mistrust women as a result of his relationship with his mother. For the majority of these readers therefore, their ‘fairly sympathetic’ response to Joel is a result of the balance between the negative effect of his attitudes to others, balanced against the positive effect of his personal feelings, or explained by his memories.

A similar pattern is found in the responses to Becka’s characterisation, and the ‘fairly sympathetic’ responses of these readers to Becka is again a result of the balancing of positive and negative aspects. (See Figure 15)

Figure 15: Responses to Becka – ‘Fairly Sympathetic’ Readers

Participants/ Narrative Mode	‘Negative’ elements (Columns 13, 15)	‘Positive’ elements (Columns 13, 14)
6m B (N) + ve	She’s sort of dependent a derivative character who derives all her meaning from being with him (ls. 959-960)	The unequal partner in the relationship, unable to realise herself within the framework provided by his responses to her (ls. 17-18)
(revenge)		What he did was to put her into a position which was so psychologically damaging and untenable that it thoroughly explains why she should do something like this to the cat (ls.)
7f B(N) + ve	Her energy appeals but her self-pity at the end does not (ls. 36-37) She ‘needs’ a man – any will do by the end of the tale (l. 29)	She has a poor self-image (l.29)
(revenge)	I certainly think she went down in my estimation but going so far as to gas a cat and bin it	maybe her remorse afterwards did something to redress the balance
8f B (N) + ve B (R) + ve (revenge)	I don’t like cats but I really cannot bear the thought of anything alive being just dropped in a dustbin (ls. 84-85)	I think I understand her more because she’s done that it gives an extra edge to her despair and her desperate frustration (ls. 85-90)
12m B (N) + ve B (R) + ve	The relationship failed because Becka tried to dominate Joel and she didn’t give him any feeling of support or confidence (ls. 11-12)	Her confidence has been shattered by the fact that Joel has left her for other women, she doesn’t have his trust or respect any longer. She doubts her love for him. (ls. 17-18)
13f B (N) + ve B (R) + ve		In her account she seems vulnerable, lonely (l.21) As Joel’s account begins to go into his ‘affairs’ and then we ‘see’ him in action, picking up a woman, as another woman I begin to understand what the situation was and how Becka felt (ls. 19-21)
(revenge)		I didn’t like feel against her because she was doing something to the cat I could understand her reaction there and it made me feel more sympathetic towards her (ls. 42-48)
14f B (N) - ve B (R) + ve		Rather insecure emotionally at present (l. 21) She seems lonely and to have lost her confidence. Therefore I can’t help feeling sorry for her (ls. 27-28)

As noted, Becka's 'self-doubt' is capable of being seen as either a positive or negative element of her characterisation, as can be seen in Participant 6m's response; Becka is '*a derivative character who derives all her meaning from him*' (ls. 554-556), but is also '*unable to realise herself within the framework provided by his responses to her*' (ls. 17-18), despite (because of?) the fact that she is the 'unequal partner' in the relationship, Becka's dependency is unattractive compared with Joel's '*autonomy*' (l. 557). Hence Participant 6m's sympathy for Becka is '*symbolic sympathy*' as a result of her '*plight*' (l. 598) rather than real sympathy. A similar balancing effect can be seen in the response of Participant 7f, who contrasts Becka's negative '*self-pity*' (l. 36), with her '*poor self-image*' (l. 29), factor which renders her less interesting but also less powerful. Similarly, the fact that Participant 12m blames Becka for the failure of the relationship is mitigated by the fact that he refers to her loss of confidence, Joel's lack of trust or respect for her, and her feelings of '*victimisation*', elements which are capable of arousing understanding and sympathy.

The other element which might be predicted to elicit expressions of disapproval for Becka, namely, her act of revenge, is also weighed against Becka's feelings. Participant 7f is the participant who expresses most disapproval, e.g., '*she went down in my estimation*', but even in this instance, she suggests that Becka's '*remorse did something to redress the balance*'. For the remaining participants who refer to the 'kidnapping', Participants 8f and 13f both comment that it increases '*understanding*' and, in the case of Participant 13f, makes her feel '*more sympathetic*'. In keeping with his '*symbolic sympathy*', Participant 6m feels that Becka is '*justified*' in her actions, since Joel's attitudes '*thoroughly explain why she should do something like this to the cat*'. Similarly, although she does not refer specifically to Becka's actions, it is implied in Participant 14f's reference to Becka's

feelings of 'loneliness' and her lack of confidence, and Participant 14f's claim to '*feel sorry*' for both characters. In the responses of these participants therefore the balance of the negative and positive aspects of characterisation is fairly equal, consistent with their 'fairly sympathetic' responses. They are similar in that they weigh the effects of the characters' attitudes and actions against their feelings, aspects which are expressed mainly in B (N) + ve mode and B (R) + ve mode for each character respectively.

However there are also differences among the participants. Firstly, three of the women refer specifically to Joel's attitude to women. For example, Participant 7f comments on his '*stereotypical mcp elements*', an aspect which '*repels*' her (ls. 21-23); Participant 8f refers to Joel's '*visualisings of Becka and Amelia as objects (not subjects)*', and Participant 14f comments, '*I don't like the way it appears he plays with or uses women*'. This tendency is not apparent in the men's responses; in fact, Participant 12m's comments suggest a predisposition to accept Joel's point of view over Becka's. Despite the fact that he comments that Joel's section is '*critical and one-sided*', his perception that Becka wants to '*dominate*' Joel is different from that of the other participants, who perceive Becka to be the powerless partner. However, Participant 12m's response is rather more complicated than it appears, and will be discussed further below.

In addition, Participant 13f refers specifically to her ability to understand Becka's reaction, e.g., '*as Joel's account begins to go into his affairs and then we see him in action, picking up a woman, I begin to understand...how Becka felt*' (ls. 19-21). Similarly, she claims to identify with Becka's feelings e.g. '*I knew what she felt about that and I knew what she was going through...I could understand her reaction there*' (ls. 47-48). Participant 13f's sympathetic response to Becka therefore appears to be a result of her ability to identify with Becka's situation and feelings, (cf. '*Things I could*

relate to', ls.3-4), reflected in her greater use of the B (R) + ve mode. However, she does not emphasise her own feelings in the same way as Participant 22m, which may be due to the fact that she was not interviewed. Empathetic readings such as those of Participant 22m and Participant Ef in the preliminary study appear to be partly a result of being able to express feelings about the characters more easily in an interview situation. Both Participant 22m and Participant 13f make greater use of the B (R) + ve mode than do most of the other participants. Participant 6m's comment that *'you identify according to what roles or positions you may have found yourself in in the past'* is combined with a re-telling which is predominantly B (N) + ve mode. As a result, his comments are more distanced than those of Participants 22m and 13f, who refer to the characters' feelings. Comments such as theirs lend support to Seilman and Larsen's suggestion that 'reminders' are an important factor in response, and the ability to relate to some aspect of the characters' inner perspective or to their situation apparently elicits a stronger response than the tendency to relate to the text as a fictional construct. However, stronger responses are not inevitably more sympathetic, and I will return to these aspects below.

I will conclude my discussion of the responses of this group of readers by considering the way in which they represent the relationship between Joel and Becka metaphorically. I predicted that the perception that Becka is the least powerful partner would be reflected in the metaphorical structuring of the responses. However, the situation is more complicated, since the ability to 'see' the perspectives of both characters results in a mixture of metaphorical mappings which are sometimes a reflection of our conventional relationship schema, but which are sometimes a reflection of the structures represented in the original story. The former instance is an indication of the participant's perception of the characters; the latter however,

reflects the characters' perspectives, and indicates awareness and understanding of the character's mind-style, without necessarily indicating the participant's response.

I will first consider the response of Participant 12m, since his perception that Becka wants to '*dominate*' Joel is apparently different from the perception of her powerlessness, implicit in the other responses (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Participants' Metaphorical Representation of the Relationship – 'Fairly Sympathetic' Readers

Participant Response	Metaphor	Source domain / Conventional	Source domain - Reflection of story	Ground
6m	<i>The unequal partner in the relationship</i>	Partnership	Love is Loss of Control	Share resources with partner
	<i>What he did was to put her into a position which was so ... psychologically damaging and untenable</i>		War/contest	Gain control/ advantage over enemy
7f	<i>Joel is a free spirit, liking his space, his moral freedom</i>	Partnership (share space)	territory	protect space
	<i>He is possibly caught in a mid-life crisis</i>		Nature/hunting?	Curtailment of freedom
8f	<i>A liberated woman with a yearning to be secure Becka wants some way of getting at this person</i>	Partnership/ connection/ share space	(territory)	Protect space Regain control/ Establish connection
12m	<i>The relationship failed because Becka tried to dominate Joel and she didn't give him any feeling of support or confidence</i>	partnership		Share resources with partner
	<i>Her confidence has been shattered. She doesn't have his trust or respect any longer</i>	partnership		
	<i>He probably went out with other women who weren't a threat to his ego</i>		War/contest	Choose unskilled opp
	<i>He perhaps was more... laid back about the relationship ... she felt she had to do this to stake her claim</i>		territory	Claim rights to territory
14f	<i>Becka has found it harder and is pushed into doing something which surprises herself and makes her sad ... she's driven to do something which she herself is surprised at</i>	Partnership war		Take drastic action in situation
	<i>(Joel) found his relationship with Becka too confining</i>		Territory/ prison	Loss of Freedom

If we examine the structures which underpin Participant 12m's comments, we can see that his perception of Becka's attempted dominance is in fact *consistent* with her powerlessness. Participant 12m's use of metaphors can be seen to be related to the partnership structure which underlies our relationship schema. As discussed in

Chapter Six, this structure consists of a series of mappings from a source domain (partnership), which entails subsidiary mappings; i.e., partnerships are businesses which involve mutual effort, have an end product which is valuable, reap profits, and can fail. In addition, we conceive of relationships in terms of investment; we ‘put in resources’ in order to maintain a successful business. All of these aspects are mapped on to the target domain of relationships, and can be seen as the basis of Participant 12m’s response; e.g., ‘*the relationship (partnership) failed because Becka tried to dominate Joel*’ (i.e., tried to take too much power, or more than her share of the resources). Similarly ‘*she didn’t give him any feeling of support or confidence*’ (failed to invest any resources). However, Becka’s actions are explained or excused on the grounds that her own ‘resources’ have ‘run out’; ‘*Her confidence has been shattered...she doesn’t have his trust or respect any longer*’. These comments indicate the imposition of the conventional partnership structure to comment both on Becka’s attempted dominance and the reasons for it. By contrast, Participant 12m utilises a different metaphorical structure, which is a reflection of the structures present in the story, e.g., ‘*he was more...laid back about the relationship...she felt she had to do this to stake her claim*’. In my analysis, I argued that Joel’s perception of Becka as an adversary or enemy underpinned his thoughts about ‘protecting his space’. Participant 12m’s reading suggests that Becka’s actions are a result of her powerlessness; she has run out of resources and is trying to exert her right to take Joel’s (‘*stake her claim*’). Such a reading is consistent with the Love is Loss of Control structure which I suggested largely typified Becka’s mind-style. Participant 12m’s use of metaphors therefore reflects those apparent in the representation of the characters’ mind-styles, and thus illustrates an understanding of the viewpoint of both characters. The majority of the metaphorical structures in Figure can be related

to the Love is Loss of Control aspect, or to the perception that Becka is attempting to regain control.

Participant 8f's perception of Becka as '*a liberated woman with a yearning to be secure... (Becka) wants some way of getting at this person*' reflects the source domain, 'territory', apparent in the original story. However this time it is associated with Becka; Joel is secure inside his 'space' and Becka wants to connect with him. This is both a conventional metaphor, and a reflection of those used in the story, re-told, in this instance, from Becka's point of view.

Participant 6m's comments also reflect the partnership structure e.g., '*she is the unequal partner in the relationship*', a conventional mode of expression, which also reflects Becka's powerlessness. However, the second part of this metaphor stems from a source domain of war/contest, e.g.,

What he did was to put her into a position which was so...psychologically damaging and untenable that it thoroughly explains why she should do something like this to the cat (ls.213-215)

This comments reflects both the Love is War, and the Love is Loss of Control which typify the mind-styles of Joel and Becka respectively. The ground of the comparison is 'loss of control', which is the same as being put in a dangerous position; i.e., by the 'enemy'. Becka is unable to 'move' without taking drastic action, a conceptualisation which is further illustrated by Participant 6m's perception that she is '*unable to realise herself within the framework of his responses to her*' and '*consumed by the injustice of her situation*'. In all of these, Becka's loss of control in her relationship with Joel is conceptualised in terms of the danger of being 'trapped' in a difficult situation; unable to move, Becka is '*consumed*' by her emotions, as if by fire. The source domain of war is thus mapped on to Becka's situation, and Participant 6m's comments thus reflect Becka's point of view, her

inability to achieve her aims as a result of Joel's mind-style. Despite the fact that Participant 6m perceives Joel to be a more interesting character, his '*symbolic sympathy*' for Becka's '*plight*' is reflected in the Love is Loss of Control structure which is adopted in his re-telling, and which reflects Becka's point of view.

A similar conceptualisation can be seen in Participant 14f's response. Like Participant 12m, she sees Becka as having 'lost resources' (e.g., '*insecure emotionally*', '*lost her confidence*'), a perception which therefore explains Becka's actions. Our conceptualisation of business partnerships is partly structured in terms of war; when a business is failing, we take drastic action, and this aspect is mapped on to failing relationships, e.g., '*Becka has found it harder and is pushed into something which surprises herself and makes her sad*'; '*She's driven to do something which she herself is surprised at*'. The source domain of business or contest is further mapped onto Participant 14f's view of Becka's situation; the strength of Becka's emotions cause her to lose control and take actions that she would not normally take. The responses of Participants 14f and 6m may be compared in this respect, since the latter's use of metaphor implies that Becka is pushed (by Joel?), which is similar to Participant 6m's comment that she was '*put into a position*'; Becka's loss of control is implicit in both of these. However, Participant 14f also reflects Joel's point of view in her comment '*(Joel) found his relationship with Becka too confining*', again reflecting the 'territory' metaphor of the original story i.e., Joel wants to remain within his own territory, but also wants to 'escape' from Becka.

Similarly, Participant 7f comments that '*Joel is a free spirit, liking his space his moral freedom*'. In this case however, the concept is combined with an additional metaphor; '*He is possibly caught in a mid-life crisis*'. The source domain of this metaphor seems to be nature, specifically hunting, with Joel being conceptualised as

a bird or animal caught in a trap, i.e. 'life'. In this instance, it is Joel who is perceived to have lost control; Life 'catches' Joel with the 'trap' of a relationship crisis, and Participant 7f's comments reflect an understanding of Joel's inner perspective.

The discussion so far has attempted to show the way in which the participants take various factors into account while reading, balancing the features of characterisation which I have termed 'negative' and 'positive', and which are summarised below. The insights into the characters' thoughts, evident in instances of the B (R) mode in the re-tellings, is used to explain the characters' behaviour, and results in expressions of approval and/or disapproval from the readers, apparent in the use of B (N) mode. There is a consensus among the participants concerning the way in which they view the relationship between the characters, and this is reflected metaphorically in their re-tellings, with Becka perceived to be the least powerful partner, reflected in the imposition of the Love is Loss of Control structure. However, there is also an awareness of Joel's point of view, reflected in the use of metaphors which explain his desire for freedom and his own 'space'. These can be related to the Love is War/ Women are Adversaries structure, with an additional element, apparent in Participant 7f's comments, i.e. Life is a Trap. However, the participants differ in their perception of Joel's reliability, although this does not appear to have a significant effect on their responses. Participants 6m and 7f see Joel as unreliable but are not unsympathetic; Participant 12m sees Joel as unreliable (*'critical and one-sided'*), yet apparently accepts his point of view. I will consider the effect of Joel's unreliability further in my discussion of the responses.

To sum up therefore, the re-tellings of the participants discussed so far see the balance between the two characters as follows;

1. Joel's egocentricity and attitude to women are balanced against his feelings and memories;

2. Becka's lack of confidence (as a negative quality) and her act of revenge are balanced against her lack of power and loss of control (capable of arousing sympathy)
3. Joel's desire for freedom is compared with Becka's desire for connection. The participants' use of metaphors expresses a) a conventional partnership structure which is an indication of approval or disapproval in accordance with the relationship schema, and/or b) a reflection of the characters' mind-styles which indicates understanding, but which may or may not be an indication of approval or disapproval.

The balance between the various elements results in a response which is 'fairly sympathetic' to both i.e., neither character is favoured more strongly than the other, a response which was predicted at the outset.

7. 7 (iii) '-1, -1' Readers = 'Fairly Unsympathetic' to both: Participants 11m and 18m

In the case of those participants who claimed to be 'fairly unsympathetic' to both characters, namely participants 11m and 18m, the 'negative' elements for both characters are given more emphasis in the re-tellings. Both of these participants display minimal insight into the characters' feelings; for example, Participant 11m makes no reference to Joel's feelings, and only comments that Becka is '*shallow and confused*', and '*surprised at herself*' (ls. 19-20). This is consistent with his comment that he felt '*detached*' from the story (l.165). Participant 18m uses the insights into the characters' thoughts to explain his lack of sympathy, as will be discussed below. This time, mitigating factors such as Joel's childhood memories and Becka's loss of confidence, are insufficient to balance the unattractive aspects of characterisation, namely, Joel's egocentricity and Becka's act of revenge. In the case of Participant 18m, the insight into Becka's thoughts is the reason for his disapproval of her. I will begin with an extract from his questionnaire transcript, since his comments are similar to those of Participant 5f discussed above, who claimed to be both sympathetic and unsympathetic to both characters.

I felt sorry for him as a victim of 'hate campaigns' which wouldn't be very pleasant for anyone. He had an unhappy childhood. He was nice to his cat. But he wasn't considerate of Becka's feelings about his infidelity. He didn't face up to Becka - avoided her when she wanted to call. He wanted to blank out anything which didn't fit in with his requirements/ caused him inconvenience (e.g. people who criticised him, he was happy he didn't have to stay around with Amelia, Becka was a source of inconvenience).

(ls.14-20, '+' and (-),column 11)

In this instance, the sympathy which is aroused as a result of Joel's

'realisation' that the cat has been taken (l.26) is insufficient to counteract the negative elements of Joel's characterisation, and his comments lack the references to Joel's feelings about Uglypuss apparent in those discussed above. References to Joel's unhappy childhood similarly do not alter Participant 18m's negative response to Joel's 'egocentricity', e.g., his lack of consideration for Becka, his tendency to '*blank out anything which didn't fit in with his requirements*' (ls. 15-20) and the fact that he is perceived to be '*egotistical*' (l.10). Despite Participant 18m's 'fairly unsympathetic' response to Joel however, Joel's point of view is accepted in that he is seen to be a '*victim of hate campaigns*' (l 14), that his 'paranoia' is perhaps justified (l. 10, '+ R', column 12). This may be compared with the responses of those participants who claimed to be 'fairly sympathetic' to Joel even though they perceived him to be unreliable; Participant 18m's acceptance of Joel's perception of events does not result inevitably in sympathy for him. However, his unsympathetic response to Becka is combined with the perception that she is relatively powerless in the relationship.

Becka wants to get back with Joel, sort things out. She has realised she's dependent on him, but can't get over his infidelity. At the end she wants to get even with him by messing up his apartment and hiding the cat.
(ls.2-3)

The partnership metaphor is again invoked to reflect the Love is Loss of Control structure, and is similar to the responses already discussed. Becka is seen to be the 'unequal' partner who wants to '*get even*'. She is '*subordinate*' (l.29) and unable

to ‘get over’ Joel’s infidelity, thereby reflecting the Love is a Journey structure.

Whereas partners normally ‘travel’ and overcome obstacles together, Becka is ‘left behind’, unable to get over the ‘obstacle’ of infidelity that Joel has placed in her path. However, the response of Participant 18m differs from those of the participants who claimed to be ‘fairly sympathetic’ to both characters, due to the fact that he blames Becka for her situation.

In many ways this was of her own making, expecting things out of The relationship which were ideals. She is also a victim of social ideal/dogmatic upbringing which expected marriage and a monogamous relationship. (ls. 32-36)

In this case, the perception of Becka’s powerlessness is not used to excuse her actions, but to blame her for her own situation.

In the case of Participant 11m, Joel’s egocentricity is the central factor in his ‘unsympathetic’ response. Joel is described as ‘selfish’ (l.1) and ‘self-centred’, (l.13) as well as being perceived to be unreliable.

he seemed very opinionated and egocentric and he was right and everybody else was wrong (l.42-43, ‘-’, column 11)

His disapproving response to Joel’s egocentricity is combined with a resistance to Joel’s point of view, suggesting that Participant 11m views the responses of others to Joel as confirmation of the more unattractive aspects of Joel’s ‘personality’.

the fact that he has attracted near-universal animosity (landlord, party guest, girlfriend, right-wingers, left-wingers) and has even got a shaky relationship with his cat (no food, no medicine for it), as he had with his mother - all suggests that he has an attitude problem. (l.14-17, ‘-U’, column 12)

In this instance, the insight into Joel’s childhood memories is used to support the perception that Joel is unreliable, and demonstrates a certain resistance to Joel’s perspective. It also contrasts with Participant 18m’s expression of sympathy for Joel as a ‘victim of hate campaigns’, which suggests acceptance of Joel’s point of view.

Again, there is no apparent relationship between the perception of Joel's reliability and response, since both of these participants are 'fairly unsympathetic' to Joel, even though they differ in their perception of his reliability. The reference to Joel's childhood memory in Participant 11m's re-telling, rather than eliciting sympathy, provides the foundation for his disapproval, and Joel's '*attitude*' is seen to be the cause of his 'persecution', and of his unhappy personal relationships. However, Participant 11m also resists Becka's point of view;

Sighing over the phone and the talk of firming creams, the use of the husky voice to charm the landlord are all rather coquettish. Her commitment to the 'causes' espoused was relegated at the expense of maintaining the stability of the group, which she was threatening (ls. 23-26)

This is information which is obtained from both Joel's and Becka's sections to confirm Joel's perception of Becka. The 'firming creams' information, and the fact that Becka has been forced to leave the troupe, (contained in a report of Joel's words) are provided via Becka's thoughts in her section (pp. 107 and 109 respectively), whereas Becka's sighs and 'husky' (actually 'furry') voice are described from Joel's point of view in his section (pp.90 and 83 respectively). However, Participant 11m's response is influenced by his perception that the author is male, which leads to a conflation of implied author and Reflector roles. For example, he perceives Becka's actions to be uncharacteristic and therefore unbelievable, a response which appears at first to be based on Joel's perception of Becka's ability to use her voice to achieve certain goals.

I think it's a fairly violent thing to do you know take a little axe and wreck a house (.) I'd expect that (.) because he'd said that she could be very sort of conniving and wheedling you know with the landlord using her special voice her husky voice I think he said it was a bit unconvincing really
(ls. 102-105)

It becomes apparent that the pronoun 'he' in the phrase '*her husky voice, I think he said*', actually refers to the author, and allows Participant 11m to criticise the

fact that Becka's actions are not '*slotted into the story very well*' (l.124), and which he contrasts with the remainder of the story.

it was quite good the language and some bits were quite nicely intelligibly written and so on but erm I think they were perhaps a little bit better than what he was writing (.) was it a he (ls. 146-149)

Participant 11m's resistance to Becka's point of view is therefore partly due to the fact that he perceives her actions to be uncharacteristic and unconvincing, and is not due to his perception of Joel as unreliable.

Joel's egocentricity is therefore a particularly strong factor in causing these two participants to respond unsympathetically to him. In Participant 11m's account, the conflation of implied author and Reflector roles results in a perception of Becka which mirrors Joel's. However, although this affects his response to Becka, it does not inevitably lead to sympathy for Joel, and his unsympathetic response to both characters does not alter the fact that he perceives the relationship to be unequal and in Joel's favour. He expresses this in even stronger metaphorical terms than those participants who are 'fairly sympathetic' to both characters. For example, he claims that Becka goes '*over the top*' to get her own back on Joel, (ls. 1-2) a comment which reflects the 'container' (or war?) metaphor which I discussed in Chapter Six. However, he also claims that

I think it was unlikely that you'd find a person with his extreme views erm (1) matching up with a person who was representative of the little girl lost and clashing head on like that (ls.30-32)

His reading results from the acceptance of Joel's perception of Becka as '*coquettish*', '*wheeling*' and '*conniving*', and a violent action on Becka's part is therefore perceived to be '*unconvincing*'. This is reflected in his description of her as a '*little girl lost*', i.e., she is incapable of engaging in a violent confrontation with Joel; it is '*unlikely*' that they would be '*clashing head on*'. His use of metaphors here is

interesting since it supports his impression of the unconvincing nature of Becka's actions. The source domain is that of stag-fighting (*clashing head-on*) with the ground being a contest of strength. Becka's characterisation as a '*little girl lost*' is symptomatic of her lack of power in relation to Joel; 'little girls' are not equal to stags in terms of strength, thus reflecting the unequal power relationship between Joel and Becka.

It is apparent therefore that the 'fairly unsympathetic' responses of Participants 11m and 18m include references to similar elements as the previous 'fairly sympathetic' participants; however, they differ in respect of the importance attributed to the negative and positive elements. Joel's egocentricity is the primary source of their disapproval, but they differ in their response to Becka. Participant 18m refers to Becka's feelings, but uses these as a basis for disapproval. Rather than the 'desperation' with which she is attributed in the sympathetic account of Participant 8f for example, Participant 18m sees Becka's actions as motivated by revenge (*'get even'*) and unrealistic expectations, whereas Participant 11m sees her actions as unconvincing due to her characterisation as a '*little girl lost*'.

Those participants who claimed to be either 'fairly sympathetic' or 'fairly unsympathetic' to both characters refer to these same elements to make a positive or negative character evaluation, but differ in the way in which they 'weigh' the various elements. The metaphors used by the participants to describe the relationship all demonstrate a perception that Becka is the least powerful partner, but are not necessarily an indication of sympathy for her, as is apparent in the response of Participant 18m.

The remaining comments continue the trend already noted, the difference again being the degree of significance which is placed on the various negative and positive

elements. For ease of discussion I will discuss the responses of the remaining readers as one group, outlining the way in which the negative and positive elements are weighted in accordance with their responses.

7. 7 (iv) Effect on Response of the Relative Weighting of the ‘Positive’ and ‘Negative’ Elements

The participants so far have all shown a strong response to Joel’s egocentricity, with only one participant, Participant 6m, seeing it as positive aspect. It is also a particularly strong factor in the responses of Participants 11m and 18m, and it is mainly responsible for the ‘totally unsympathetic’ responses of Participants Am, 9f, 19f, and 23m. The difference between these four participants is that Participant 9f is also ‘fairly unsympathetic’ to Becka, whereas the remaining three participants are ‘fairly sympathetic to Becka’. Participant 9f’s unsympathetic response to Becka is due to Becka’s act of revenge.

I don’t like what she did to the cat! Up to that point where she dumps the cat I was fairly sympathetic. (ls. 13-14, also 15-18, 30-35, 90-94)

Like Participant 11m, Participant 9f sees Becka’s actions as uncharacteristic;

I didn’t think it was something that (.) Becka’s character would do (.) erm (.) I don’t know I just went totally off the story up until then it was realistic
(ls. 16-18)

Becka’s act of revenge thus thwarts her intuitively sympathetic response, as is illustrated by the remainder of her comments, which I will compare with those of Participants Am, 19f and 23m. Figure 14 shows the way in which the responses of these four participants focus on the negative aspects of Joel’s egocentricity, with only minimal reference to his childhood memories, and no reference to his feelings.

Figure 17: Responses to Joel – ‘-2’ = Totally unsympathetic’ readers

Participant/ Narrative mode	Negative element	Positive element
Am B (N) + ve	Self-centred, egocentric, vain, Ideologically boring...he has no loyalty or real affection for anyone except his cat and his typewriter (ls. 21-23)	The only smidgin of sympathy I can find for him is from his childhood (ls. 18-19)
19f B (N) + ve	Selfish (l.12) Joel’s (summing up) of Amelia is offensive (ll. 10-11)	
9f B (N) + ve	Pompous, egotistical, thinks he’s got everyone’s number	
23m B (N) + ve	Selfish, self-centred, opinionated intellectual A womaniser who cannot see his conquests as people	Damaged by an inadequate childhood

The disapproval of these four participants to Joel is apparent in their overwhelming use of the B (N) + ve mode, and is concentrated primarily on Joel’s egocentricity. By contrast, their ‘fairly sympathetic’ responses to Becka (with the exception of Participant 9f, for the reason already discussed) is a result of their perception of her loss of confidence, e.g;

- Participant Am *Becka to me is insecure, vain, naïve, lonely and lacking in confidence* (l. 24)
- Participant 19f *(Becka is) a bit long suffering, vulnerable, underconfident, compassionate, warm, has social conscience* (ls. 18-19)

In addition, although Participant Am disapproves of Becka’s act of stealing Uglypuss, both he and Participant 19f refer to her feelings. Participant Am comments that ‘*she feels quite guilty afterwards*’, and Participant 19f that she ‘*suffers, feels scorned*’. Interestingly, Participant 23m makes no reference to Becka’s loss of confidence, he blames Joel, not Becka for her act of revenge; e.g., ‘*that’s why I disliked Joel even more because the cat was the victim of this story really*’. (ls. 10-11)

As noted, Becka's actions are the main reason for Participant 9f's claim to be 'fairly unsympathetic' towards her. In every other respect, her response suggests strong disapproval of Joel and resistance to his point of view, e.g.,

all the time Joel was saying (.) you know (.) particular things about Becka I'd be thinking oh yeah (.) you know I'm sure her side of the story (.) you know I relate more to women's side of stories than (.) men's usually
(ls. 50-53, '-U', column 12)

In the case of Participants Am, 19f and 23m, their 'totally unsympathetic' response to Joel is a result of the greater significance which is placed on the negative aspects of his characterisation. As might be expected, these participants see the relationship balanced in Joel's favour, and Participants Am and 9f invoke the partnership metaphor to express this e.g.;

Am *He wants to dominate and manipulate* (ls. 20-21)
9f *sounds like he gave nothing to his relationship – expected the woman to adapt/change, and when she didn't he didn't want her any more.* (9-10)

These responses reflect our conventional view of relationships in line with the partnership construction which underlies our relationship schema. Participant 9f's response is slightly different, since her disapproval of Becka, apparent in her loss of sympathy following Becka's act of revenge, and reflected in her 'fairly unsympathetic' response, is also apparent in her use of metaphors; she describes Becka as '*too willing to please, plays the martyr*' (l.11). Her disapproval may be compared with the responses of Participants Lf and Tf in the preliminary study, whose resistance to Rosalind's point of view in *Lappin and Lapinova* was, I argued, due to her passivity. Participant 9f's resistance to Becka's point of view is explained by the following comment; '*I'm fed up with the woman as victim role*'. Participant 9f's use of metaphors is again related to the partnership construction, with the perception that

Becka's willingness to contribute more than her share is a negative aspect, indicative of her 'victim' status.

The responses of Participants Am and 23m also reflect some of the metaphors which illustrate Joel's thinking in the story. For example, Participant Am comments that Joel wants someone that he can '*mould and keep furry like his cat*' (ls.40-41). In my analysis in Chapter Six, I noted Joel's description of his attempts to 'educate' Becka, and his perception that she could only 'parrot' him. Participant Am's metaphor draws from the same target domain, domestic pets, to describe Joel's attitude to Becka; the shared ground between Becka and pets is Joel's assumption that both are furry and can be trained. Participant Am's understanding of Joel's mode of thought results in an expression of disapproval, using metaphors drawn from the same source domain.

Participant 23m by contrast utilises a metaphor drawn from the source domain of war; Joel is described as a '*womaniser who cannot see his conquests as people*', thus reflecting Joel's perception of women as the enemy. Both of these metaphors are more damning than the partnership construction, and reflect the strongly disapproving responses of Participants Am and 23m. They adopt the metaphors which reflect Joel's point of view, using the insight into Joel's mind as a foundation for their disapproval. This may be compared with the responses of the '+1, +1' readers, in which the reflection of the characters' mind-styles in the re-tellings indicated understanding, rather than approval or disapproval.

In summary then, the readers who are 'totally unsympathetic to Joel' use Joel's egocentricity, and his thoughts and feelings, as a basis for disapproval. Such disapproval is expressed in conventional metaphors, and in metaphors which reflect Joel's mind-style. The readers who are 'fairly sympathetic to Becka' refer, as might be

expected, to Becka's self-doubt and to her feelings. However, for some readers, Becka's act of revenge results in disapproval, as in the case of Participants 10m and 18m discussed above, and apparent in Participant 9f's loss of sympathy for her. There is an additional element in the latter response, which is due to her perception of Rosalind as a 'victim, and which is expressed in her metaphorical expression of disapproval. I will consider this aspect further below in section 7. 7 (v).

Participants 10m and 15f both claim to be 'fairly unsympathetic' to Joel, and 'totally unsympathetic' to Becka. Although both refer to the negative aspects of Joel's characterisation (e.g., '*selfish*', '*superficial about personal issues*' (Participant 15f, '*selfish and unfaithful*', Participant 10m), it is Becka's act of revenge which is responsible for their lack of sympathy for her. Joel's behaviour is viewed with less disapproval in comparison, since '*he cares for Uglypuss, or at least doesn't harm it intentionally*' (Participant 10m, ls. 7-8) Both participants dislike both characters e.g., '*both are presented as weak, not particularly likeable characters*' (Participant 15f), '*both are self-serving egoists*' (Participant 10m, l. 15). However, Becka's actions are totally condemned, as is apparent again in the disapproval expressed via B (N) + ve mode;

A spiteful psychotic, with disturbingly sadistic tendencies. Her attacks against inanimate objects and animals suggest she should seek help immediately. (ls. 9-10) How can you have any sympathy for anyone who abuses cats? Then makes pathetic black jokes about it.

(Participant 10m, ls. 12-13, '+ Joel, -Becka', column 15)

I can feel no sympathy for anyone who tortures cats. She does it to get back at Joel without thinking of the suffering she's causing the animal.

(Participant 15f, ls. 18- 19, '- Becka', column 15)

Like Participants 22m and 5f above, Participant 10m conflates the role of narrator and Reflector; the insight into Becka's mind produces the impression of homodiegetic narration. Again, neither of these participants make reference to Becka's

thoughts or feelings to explain her actions, and do not take into account any mitigating factors to explain the kidnapping. However, Participant 15f does refer to Becka's feelings about Joel's infidelity;

from his point of view he seemed lonely and Becka seems like a pain - till I found out he was sleeping around when I could understand her being such a nag. (ls. 13-14)

Becka's actions not only reduce sympathy for her but make this reader 'uncomfortable' about the story as a whole, despite being the kind of fiction she normally enjoys (l.9). Perhaps not surprisingly, the metaphorical structures reflecting the previous participants' perception of inequality between Joel and Becka are not evident in the responses of Participants 10m and 15f, although Participant 10m refers to the familiarity of 'the relationship' to explain his response to the story in terms which reflect the Love is a Journey structure;

It's a well-trodden path, the relationship and the struggle for the moral low-ground (l. 3).

The disapproval of these participants is due to the fact that Becka's attacks are against 'inanimate objects and animals' (Participant 10m), and she 'tortures cats' (Participant 15f). Thus, Becka is perceived to be exerting power, rather than being powerless, which explains their disapproval. Her act of revenge is thus balanced against Joel's affection for the cat, and suggests that the balance of power is this time seen to be with Becka.

In the case of the two participants who claimed to be 'fairly sympathetic' to Joel' and 'fairly unsympathetic' to Becka, namely Participants 21m and 24m, there is an apparent acceptance of Joel's perspective of events, which results in disapproval of Becka's characterisation. Participant 21m gives the kidnapping as the reason for his lack of sympathy for Becka (l. 13), but also claims to 'understand' Joel more e.g.,

I understand his reasoning and motivation more, being male myself. He cares for the cat too. (ls.9-10)

Although his responses are rather brief, it seems that the contrast between Joel's feelings for the cat and Becka's actions are the reason for his response. In addition, he claimed that

The part from Joel's point of view seemed more believable - maybe because I'm male, and sympathise more with him. (ls. 17-18)

A similar perception is apparent in the response of Participant 24m, who also accepts Joel's perception of Becka and other events (*'I feel slightly sorry for him because Becka (and others) is unreasonable in her behaviour towards him'* ls.17-18) He combines this with the opinion that the author's presentation of Becka is less than successful e.g. *'On pg.106-7 the author tries to show a gentler side of her, guilty and weak, but it only makes her appear more irrational. (ls. 27-29).* Also apparent in Participant 24m's comments is a minimisation of Joel's egocentricity, which is excused as being a result of Becka's behaviour. Becka is again perceived to be acting as a result of her feelings, but this time, these are not feelings of pain or love, but of jealousy, as was apparent in the comments of Participant 15f. Participant 24m's disapproval is therefore evident in his description of her and of the effect of her behaviour on Joel.

Rather irrational, selfish and neurotic. According to Joel at least, she insulted him, wouldn't take advice, forced her food on him, picked arguments (then wouldn't argue rationally). She seems to be motivated chiefly by sexual jealousy, and malice because Joel wouldn't settle down with her. (ls. 19-22)

Despite the fact therefore that he recognises that Joel's point of view is potentially unreliable (ls. 37-39), Participant 24m perceives Becka to be *'unreasonable'* (l. 40). Both of these participants accept Joel's point of view in preference to Becka's, and both make little reference to Joel's egocentricity. Both also

perceive Joel's point of view to be more believable, a suggestion that is reinforced in Participant 24m's case by the use of the B (N) – ve mode to refer to Becka, (*'She seems to be motivated chiefly by sexual jealousy'*), emphasising his attempt to interpret her behaviour. In addition, he comments on one of the instances of FIS to support his perception of Becka; e.g., he argues that the phrase 'she's not heartless' is ironic (ls.59-60), and that the narrator is *'having a bit of a dig at her'* (l. 67). The narration at this point is ambiguous, and it could be argued that 'she is not heartless' is not ironic; it is preceded by the words 'someone would find it quicker that way' which indicates Becka's presupposition that the cat will be found. This suggests that Participant 24m's acceptance of Joel's perspective affects the way that he responds to FIS in Becka's section, causing him to see it as ironic. This may be compared with Participant 8f's comment; *'the writer says she is not heartless but demonstrates that she is'*, a perception that affects the responses of these participants to Becka.

While it is clear that all of the participants discussed so far differ in the degree to which the various elements elicit positive or negative character evaluations, there is a consensus of opinion that the relationship is unequal and that Becka is relatively powerless. By contrast, those participants who claim to be 'fairly unsympathetic' to Joel and 'fairly sympathetic' to Becka see Joel as responsible for his situation. Both refer to Joel's egocentricity, e.g.;

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Participant 17f | <i>The only sort of compassion he shows is towards his cat. Lacks humanity</i> (l. 12) |
| Participant 16m | <i>He is completely self-centred. He seems to have minimal consideration for other people</i> (ls. 15-16) |
| Participant 20f | <i>Felt slightly sympathetic about descriptions of him as a small child looking for food. But his overwhelming self-interest and lack of regard for others made me distance myself from him</i> (ls. 17-19) |

Whereas Joel's egocentricity is balanced by the insight into his memories in the case of Participant 20f, Participants 16m and 17f see Joel himself as responsible for his situation;

Participant 17f *many of his problems are of his own doing, he has chosen to adopt certain attitudes- particularly his attitude that the personal is of trivial importance* (ls. 2-4)

Participant 16m *takes a certain perverse satisfaction from his failure and the antipathy he provokes* (ls. 8-10)
He creates his own difficulties, looks for trouble (l. 15)

Participant 16m's response to Becka is also reflected in the Love is Loss of Control structure which again reflects Becka's mind-style, and his own explanation of his sympathy for her e.g. 'she is *'rather clinging and possessive'* (ls. 19-20) and *'a little unbalanced at the moment.'* (ls. 20-21, '+' Becka, column 13). In addition, her loss of control explains her actions, and the metaphors reflect a view of the relationship as a trap from which she must *'get away'*. Similarly, Participant 17f describes Becka as *'easily led'*, and *'ruled by her emotions'* (l.20). She also comments that Becka thinks of Joel as *'God'* (ls. 16-17), a metaphorical representation of the relationship which again reflects Becka's mind-style.

Participant 20f's response is different however, and has similarities to that of Participant 22m's 'empathetic' reading. The mitigating effect of Joel's memories is combined with the ability to *'identify'* with his feelings.

Visual picture of him desperate to find Uglypuss made me identify with him (ls. 20-21)

However, Participant 20f's response differs from that of Participant 22m, due to the fact that she can relate the text to aspects of her own life. Despite being able to identify with Joel's feelings, she is *'fairly unsympathetic'* to him, due to her ability to *'empathise'* with Becka.

I can empathise more with her than Joel, especially with her anger. I am woman centred so I find her more interesting than him. I've felt anger like hers in the past and can identify with it. Joel uses women - depersonalises them for his own convenience (ls. 26-29)

Although she can 'identify' with Joel's feelings about the cat, she can 'empathise' with Becka, a response which is based on being able to relate Becka's anger to aspects of her own experience. In addition, her unsympathetic response to Joel is also a result of being able to relate his characterisation to people she has known personally, and which allows her to share Becka's 'impatience' and 'frustration' with him (l. 32), a comment which echoes that of Participant 9f above. Her response to Joel's egocentricity is also a result of being able to relate this aspect of his personality to her own experience.

I began to realise in fact (1) that there was this other side to him he was sort of self interested almost like a baby really you know (.) everything had to revolve round him(.) and I sort of felt a sense of (.) betrayal's too big a word but a sense of erm (.) oh (.) you know yeah he appears a right on bloke but underneath he's like that and again that is so true to life in my experience (.) with lots of men that (.) probably that drew me into the story more (ls. 45-49)

Participant 20f stresses her own feelings of 'betrayal' as she comes to perceive Joel's 'real personality'. She also comments on her feeling of identification with Becka as a result of her response to Joel (l. 41), and describes his behaviour as 'typical' (l. 14). While none of the other participants discussed so far have displayed their own feelings in accordance with the 'empathetic' reading of Participant 22m, this tendency is apparent in the comments of Participant 20f. In addition, her response is a combination of the ability to relate the text to both literary and personal experiential frameworks, and demonstrates a link between her own feelings and those of the characters, thus confirming the suggestion that such reminders result in a stronger response.

Her response reiterates Participant 22m's comment that readers relate to characters' feelings and respond accordingly. Participant 20f however relates the text to aspects of her own life, whereas Participant 22m's comments are on a more abstract level, referring to feelings in general. Participant 20f's comments confirm that suggestion that being able to relate some aspect of the text to personal experience results in a stronger response, in this case, a more unsympathetic response to Joel and a more sympathetic response to Becka as a result of being able to '*identify with Becka's position*' (l.3) and with her feelings of '*anger and hurt*' (l.4). Such an ability evokes a feeling of 'sadness' (l. 65) in Participant 20f, and allows her to 'narrate' Becka's words; i.e., just as Participant 22m's comments at one stage appeared to correspond to the category of direct thought, so Participant 20f's comments can be related to direct speech, eg. '*I felt it was really sad when she got home () she said the cat could have been my cat*' . (ls. 65-66).

Again Participant 20f's sympathy for Becka is reflected in the metaphorical structuring of the relationship between her and Joel which includes the 'Love is Loss of Control' structure; Becka has been

driven to the edge...by Joel's behaviour (.) it was the only way she could actually get at him (.) (.) it was her extreme anger that had built up over her relationship with him (ls. 67-69)

Similarly, Joel's '*control and the power in his silence*' (l. 54) are blamed for Becka's act of revenge. Her use of metaphors are apparently inconsistent, since the perception of Joel's power is contrasted with her comments that Joel is '*almost like a baby...everything had to revolve round him*' and a '*little boy who was like draining her energy*' (l. 21). However, Joel's power is that of a demanding child, and is only a role which he plays (l.21, p.6). By contrast, Becka is perceived to be the one who has to do more than her share of the relationship 'work', and is again seen to be typical of

real life situations, e.g. *'I think it's quite true to life in erm (.) in the way that erm women do all the emotional spade work in a relationship'* (ls. 20-21). This time, the partnership metaphor is drawn from an additional source domain of manual work, rather than business, which is consistent with the physical demands of a child, and shares the common ground of 'draining energy'. There is also a sense of the irony of a situation in which Becka is perceived to be '*strong*' and yet looks to Joel for '*affirmation*'. Since being a mother is hard work, and being a 'successful' mother is 'affirming', the pressure and guilt experienced at times of 'failure' is implicit in the original story'; Joel's mother's inability to provide for his needs is responsible for his subsequent 'faulty' development. Participant 20f's re-telling reflects this aspect of the text in her use of metaphors, using it to comment on the 'typical' roles of men and women.

All of the participants so far have used the insight into the characters' thoughts to explain their behaviour, even in the case of the participants who re-tell the story in B (N) mode. In these instances, although there are no detailed references to the characters' thoughts, the motivation behind their behaviour is used as explanation of their behaviour. The comments of Participant 23m are an exception, since he makes no reference to the reasons for Becka's actions.

So far, there has been no obvious difference between the responses of the men and women, and no obvious relationship between the sex of the character, the sex of the reader, and response. Reactions to the 'negative' and 'positive' aspects of Joel's and Becka's characterisation have been equally mixed among men and women, in particular, responses to Becka's act of revenge have been divided, are apparently unrelated to sex similarities/differences. However, the response of Participant 23m can be compared with those of some of the women, who express regret that they are

prevented from sympathising with Becka as a result of her actions, and I will now consider some of the differences between the men and women.

7.8 Differences in Response of Men and Women to Joel and Becka

In order to illustrate some apparently different tendencies in response between the female and male participants, I will first consider the responses of Participants 1f and 3f, who claimed to have 'no opinion' about Becka. The response of Participant 4f, who responded similarly is less relevant, since she claims that her response is a result of not having read the story in sufficient detail to make character evaluations (ls. 4-5, 15-16). Participant 1f also claims to have 'no opinion' about Joel, as a result of the differing aspects of his characterisation (ls. 12-14). In this respect, her response is similar to those already discussed; she balances Joel's 'personality' ('*emotionally cold*') against the reasons for it (*because of his childhood* 1.7). However, her claim that she has 'no opinion' about Becka is due to Becka's actions, and in this respect is misleading. The aspect of Becka's 'personality' which I have termed 'self-doubt' gives rise to a sympathetic response from Participant 1f which is connected to Becka's feelings, and expressed in B (R) + ve mode. Becka is perceived to be

confident on the outside, lonely on the inside - desperately seeking affection ...a decent person who shows a nasty side of her character when she avenges herself on Joel (poor Uglypuss!) (ls. 19-22, '+', column 13)

Participant 1f's comments suggest that she is prevented from sympathising with Becka partly as a result of her feelings of sympathy for the cat.

As a woman, I want to identify with her more, but we only really get her perspective after she has committed the dastardly act of abducting Uglypuss and after we are led to believe she has murdered her with an axe. (I'm writing this with one of my cats sleeping by me) (ls.24-27)

Her desire to sympathise with Becka is thwarted by her feelings of pity for the cat (*poor Uglypuss!*) and her ability to relate this to her own life, apparent in the reference to her own pet (l. 27).

Participant 3f responds disapprovingly to Joel's characterisation, despite her 'fairly sympathetic' response to him, and claims to have lost sympathy as the story progressed, due to Joel's '*misogynistic world-view*' (ls. 9-12). However, her claim to have 'no opinion' about Becka is due to Becka's 'stereotypical' presentation e.g.;

*A stereotype. Speaks in clichés. Defines herself in relation to Joel,
Not in relation to the world and herself. Identifies with the cat (Ugly Puss/y)*
(ls. 14-16)

The difference in response between these two female participants is partly a result of the way in which they relate to the text; Participant 1f responds on a personal level as a result of her pity for the cat, whereas Participant 3f relates to it purely on a fictional level. I will return to these distinctions below.

There is an apparent desire for women readers to have positive female characters, which is thwarted in this story by a), Becka's 'self-doubt', and/or b), her act of revenge. The resistance to the former is implicit in Participant 3f's comment that Becka '*defines herself in relation to Joel*', a comment that echoes Participant 6m's perception of Becka's dependency, discussed above. Resistance to this aspect of Becka's characterisation is also implicit in the following comments;

Participant 5f	<i>The martyr image in the penitential nightgown makes me unsympathetic' (ls.34-5)</i>
Participant 9f	<i>too willing to please, plays the martyr (l.11)</i>

Similarly, Participant 19f comments on the unattractiveness of women characters who are presented as 'victims', e.g. '*I'm fed up with the woman as victim role*' (l.11).

The second aspect, namely, the effect of Becka's act of revenge, is apparent in Participant 1f's comment above, in which her desire to 'identify' with Becka is thwarted by her actions (l. 24). The impression that the women are predisposed to identify with female characters is implicit in the following comments;

- Participant 9f *I was sympathetic towards Becka before I met her...and I think that could have a lot to do with my own (.) personal politics of(.) the fact that I'm a woman and things like that (.) and I liked Becka to begin with and was (.) totally sympathetic with her and then (.) you know even to the extent that (.) ripping up his house I thought (.) fine but (.) when the cat became involved... (ls. 30-35)
you know I relate more to women's side of stories than (.) men's usually (l.52)*
- Participant 13f *as another woman I begin to understand what the situation was and how Becka felt (ls. 20-21)
because I'm a woman so I'd have identified with her more and I probably wouldn't have been so sympathetic with him if I'd have had her side of the story first (ls. 33-36)*
- Participant 14f *She's in a position I can sympathise with even tho' I don't identify with her (at all I think) (ls. 23-24)*
- Participant 20f *I can empathise more with her than Joel, especially with her anger. I am woman centred so I find her more interesting than him. I've felt anger like hers in the past and can identify with it. Joel uses women - depersonalises them for his own convenience (ls. 26-29)*

There is apparent resentment at Becka's characterisation which causes some of the women to resist Joel's point of view, and the implied author's presentation of the female character.

The desire to sympathise or identify with same sex characters is not apparent in the men's responses. Only two participants comment on the relationship between their own sex and Joel's e.g.

- Participant 21m *I understand his reasoning and motivation more, being male myself (ls. 9-10)*
- Participant 23m *I found it quite painful to see inside the mind of such an unpleasant man...Also, some of his attitudes to women*

were a bit close to home - can remember thinking like him myself, once! (ls. 7-9)

Unlike the response of the women readers to Becka, Participant 23m does not express regret at Joel's characterisation. There is an additional factor, in that the perception that the Reflector and/or narrator is male apparently creates resentment from the women readers as a result of Becka's portrayal. The following two comments illustrate the reaction of two of the women to Joel's point of view;

- Participant 7f *Becka would, I feel, not betray him, and some of the tragedy of this tale is his failure to see this (ls. 14-17)*
- Participant 8f *His visualisings of Becka and Amelia are as of objects (not subjects) (ls. 11-12)*
- Participant 17f *His views of the female gender are set. Sex is important to him. Makes generalisations about women which are ill informed. He thinks he knows women but he doesn't really. (ls. 8-10)*

These comments suggest a degree of resistance to Joel's perspective due to his 'mistaken' view of Becka, and of women in general, an aspect of his characterisation which I considered in my analysis in Chapter Six. The resistance is transferred onto the implied author as a result of 'his' portrayal of Becka.

- Participant 8f *in Joel's half of the story his picture of Becka is more of the classic compliant female (.) and his is a picture of Joel is as the (.) stereotypical wandering male (ls. 45-47)*
- Participant 9f *Stereotypical views of women wanting commitment, monogamy - being a 'nag', restricting freedom etc. Becka doesn't have a clear voice (l. 19).
I thought it was a man was because (.) he was so (.) irritating you didn't get Becka's point of view (.) he was making all these sweeping generalisations about her and you know she didn't have any thoughts of her own till she met him (ls. 77-79)*
- Participant 20f *Typical man - looking for a mother figure. Needing security and sex without being prepared to accept any responsibility. 'Little boy lost' (ls. 14-15)*

The perception of Becka as a 'stereotype' therefore causes some of the women readers to resist her characterisation, and Joel's point of view, thereby conflating Joel's perspective with that of the implied author, to conclude that their views are similar. By contrast, for other women readers, Becka's stereotypical presentation is perceived to be evidence of a feminist theme, which is again resisted due to its overfamiliarity. This is apparent in Participant 19f's comment, *'I'm fed up with the woman as victim role'*. References to the feminism implicit in the text are found in the following comments;

Participant 20f *it was the bit with his mother with the food you know that bit
...but there again you sort of resist that being a feminist
(you know what's behind all of that)* (ls. 82-83)

Participant 20f recognises the link between mothers, children and food as a 'feminist' code, which implies that Joel's mother is responsible for his development, a theme which Participant 20f resists (cf. *'Typical man -looking for a mother figure, l.14'*. The implied author's intention is perceived to be ironic; the implication is that feminists can see behind the characterisation of Joel to the 'real' message, namely, the guilt experienced by mothers for the failure of their children. This feminist code is also remarked upon by Participant 6m; *'the connection between women/ mothers and food'* (l.33). Although there are surprisingly few references to this being a feminist text, there are more comments from the women than from the men. The women refer to the relationship between Becka and the cat, in particular, they speculate that the 'kidnapping' is a symbol of Becka's desire to change her identity, as can be seen in the following comments;

Participant 7f *she certainly considers herself to be ugly erm (.) was
sort of symbolic as well (.) that she was putting herself
(.) in the bin and (.) losing herself or starting again (.)
but there again maybe I'm trying too hard on that one*
(ls. 41-43)

Participant 15f *No feminist stuff really, except in the way Joel treats women as shallow. Could be a woman (i.e. writer) if Becka dumping the cat is supposed to symbolise her dumping her old identity as a woman who moulds herself to what a man wants (ls. 26-28)*

This is an aspect which is not commented on by any of the men. As noted in my discussion of the preliminary study, the recognition of such codes can result in overfamiliarity and hence resistance, as is apparent in Participant 3f's claim that Becka is a 'stereotype',

In addition, Participant 15f's comments suggest another comparison between the men and women readers, namely, the way in which they perceive male and female writers. For example, some of the men's reasons for thinking that the author is female is illustrated by the following comments;

Participant 11m *Mainly intuition. The puss as focus of the broken-down relationship; the convincing woman-talk at the party. The stereotypical male thoughts we read. As I say - a male writer might also have produced this. (ls. 34-38)*

Participant 12m *Probably by a woman. Becka is portrayed with some subtlety and understanding for how a woman feels in this situation. (ls. 23-24)*

These comments may be compared with those of the women, who express caution about stereotyping women's writing. For example, Participant 7f comments that her opinion that the author is female is based on

A very old-fashioned and probably fallacious notion that women tend to be more tuned in to relationships and emotions and write about them more. The gender roles throw me - Becka is not the 'strong woman' of feminist championing nor Joel the unexplained mcp. An attempt at delivering male psychology and female - an author who sees two sides to the tale? (ls. 43-47)

Participant 1f comments that her perception that the author is female is based on 'A sexist reason';

because of the concern with the interior life, with emotions, motivations, relationships - areas in which women have traditionally concentrated on

in the novel (ls. 37-39)

There is a tendency therefore for these female participants to recognise certain elements in the text while remaining cautious about assuming that these are specifically female tendencies.

In the case of Participant 11m, the perception that Joel's thoughts are 'stereotypical', allows him to speculate that the author may be female, and in this respect may be compared to the women who also thought that the characters are stereotypical. However, the impression that the use of a cat as a literary device is a female trait is similar to the responses of the women, with the exception that Participant 11m does not link this to the aspects of Becka's identity noted in the responses of the female participants. This suggests that this is an example of the activation of a feminist code which is more familiar to the women.

7. 9 Participants' Perceptions of Point of View in *Uglypuss*

Participant 12m's comments illustrate the perception that writers are better able to write about emotions of same sex characters. There is a consensus among the participants that the story is told mainly from Joel's point of view, a perception that allows some of them to assume that the author is male. Although the majority of participants comment on the fact that the point of view of both characters is presented and that both are plausible, several also describe the way in which their sympathies vary according to which section they are reading. Although some readers are unable to state categorically the sex of the author, the perception of some that the author is male is primarily due to the strong effect of Joel's characterisation as egocentric. This results in some of the participants conflating the roles of implied author and Reflector, to conclude that the implied author must also be male. I noted a similar tendency with regard to the response of Participant 11m, who commented that the implied author's

characterisation of Becka as a ‘*little girl lost*’ rendered her act of revenge ‘*unconvincing*’. His response was due to Participant 11m’s acceptance of Joel’s perception of Becka, which was attributed by default to the author, and perceived to be a comment on Becka’s ‘personality’. The perception that the reader is provided with more information about one character’s point of view than another differs among the participants, although this again does not automatically guarantee a sympathetic response. Figure 18 shows the comments of Participants 11m, 23m, 17f, 21m, 24, 19f, and 8f.

Figure 18: Readers’ Perceptions of Point of View in *Uglypuss*

Participant/Response	Joel's point of view	Becka's point of view
Participant 11m (-1, -1)	It did seem written more from the man's point of view because we had more of his thoughts (ls 65-66)	There wasn't a balance in that sense that she was given as many facets as he was given to sort of justify herself or put her side
Participant 23m (-2, +1)	One part of the story is written from Joel's perspective, one from Becka's. But more is written from Joel's, which reveals more of his unpleasant nature and does not seem to be sympathetic (ls 24-27)	I think maybe if I'd seen more of her point of view perhaps I would have understood her a little bit (ls 46-47)
Participant 17f (-1, +1)	Most of the story is written from Joel's perspective. We gain insights into Joel's history past/present. I get the impression the writer 'knows' Joel more than Becka (ls 24-25)	(the writer) describes an example of female behaviour but not what Becka is thinking at least not in the same way/depth/detail... he does the mind of Joel (ls 30-31)
Participant 21m (+1, -1)	The part from Joel's point of view seemed more believable, perhaps because I'm male, and sympathise more with him (ls 17-18)	
Participant 24m (+1, -1)		The author tries to show a gentler side of her, guilty and weak, but it only makes her appear more irrational (ls 27-29)
Participant 19f (-2, +1)		The author presents thoughts and actions from her point of view allowing a sense of intimacy with her because the author doesn't judge her... the author simply describes what Joel does and he is not really shown in any vulnerable, more open light (ls 22-25)
Participant 2f	The majority of the story is centred on his feelings, his life, his surroundings. Becka is a way of 'enlarging' Joel's character (ls 22-23)	
Participant 22m	most of the story seems to be from his point of view (ls 98-99)	maybe the 'detached' description of so much of Joel's doings just don't make me sympathetic towards him! (ls 64-65)
Participant 9f	I thought it was a man... because he was so irritating you didn't get Becka's point of view	
Participant 8f (+1, +1)		I feel I am resisting the author's picture of Joel. He is (for instance) depicted as living in a disorganised mess partly out of principle and I think what a prat (ls 8-9)

With the exception of Participant 19f, all of the participants perceive the story to be written more from Joel's point of view, with the presentation of Becka's being seen as less detailed. Participant 19f takes the opposite view, with Becka's point of view being seen as more detailed. Both she and Participant 22m perceive Joel's point of view to be more concerned with actions than Becka's. Participant 22m's perception that most of the story is written from Joel's point of view is despite his impression of Joel's portrayal as 'detached'. In the case of Participant 23m, the perception of the greater insight into Joel's mind is used as explanation for his reason for thinking the author's sympathy is for Becka (ls. 25-27); the insight into Joel's thoughts is seen to be intentional on the part of the implied author in order to render Joel unsympathetic as a character, and is apparently successful in the case of Participant 23m (ls. 7-9)

In the case of Participant 8f, the perception that most of the story is written from Joel's point of view leads to resistance (ls.8-9). Participant 17f, like Participant 11m, conflates the role of implied author and Reflector; her perception that Joel *'Makes generalisations about women which are ill informed. He thinks he knows women but he doesn't really.'* (ls. 9-10) is combined with an impression that the author is male e.g.. *'I get the impression the writer 'knows' Joel more than Becka'*, (ls. 24-25). In addition, her impression that little information is provided about Becka's perspective is used to reinforce her perception that the author must be male.

As a woman myself, I don't think he the writer has entered the 'female mind'. He (the writer) describes an example of female behaviour but not what Becka is thinking - at least, not in the same way/depth/detail he does the mind of Joel (ls. 29-31)

This is consistent with the response of Participant 21m, who claimed that the part from Joel's point of view seemed more believable' (ls. 17-18). In this case, the conflation of author and Reflector roles not only results in a lack of sympathy for Joel,

but also creates the impression that the (implied) author holds similar attitudes to the character.

In view of the fact that six out of seven of these readers perceive the story to be written from Joel's point of view, it might be expected that they would respond in similar ways. However, this is not the case, since Figure 16 shows that their responses are mixed. Three participants are unsympathetic to Joel (Participants 11m, 23m, and 17f), and three are sympathetic (Participants 21m, 24m and 8f). In addition, Participant 19f's 'totally unsympathetic' response to Joel is despite (because of?) the fact that she perceives the story to be written mainly from Becka's point of view. In addition, the participants have been mixed in their responses, with some women being sympathetic to Joel and unsympathetic to Becka, and some men being sympathetic to Becka and unsympathetic to Joel. However, there does seem to be an apparent desire on the part of some of the women readers to be able to identify with the characters and share their experiences vicariously, which is denied to those readers for whom Joel's 'personality' and Becka's actions are unacceptable. This was noted above in connection with Participant 1f, for whom Becka's act of revenge denies her the opportunity of identifying with her, and makes some of the other women 'uncomfortable'.

Participant 21m's perception may be compared with the response of participant 17f, who also claimed that the author is male, but resisted the characterisation of Becka. These responses are consistent, since the impression that the author '*has not entered the female mind*' is compatible with the perception that Joel's thoughts are more believable, and may explain Participant 24m's acceptance of Joel's point of view (e.g. '*I feel slightly sorry for him because Becka (and others) is unreasonable in her behaviour towards him*' ls.17-18). Becka's point of view in comparison is seen as 'irrational' (ls. 27-29).

7. 10 Conclusion: Main Points arising from the Study

Having discussed the responses in detail, I will now return to the questions which were raised at the beginning of this chapter. Firstly, I set out to investigate:

- a) the extent to which the participant's degree of insight into the characters' thoughts and feelings is apparent in the use of the B (R) + ve mode
- b) the relationship between the degree of insight and expressions of approval or disapproval, apparent in the use of the B(N) + ve mode

In some respects, the findings are predictable, with participants performing a 'balancing act' with the positive and negative aspects of characterisation, between the characters' thoughts and their actions. As was the case with the preliminary study, the insight into the characters' thoughts can equally result in sympathy or resistance, responses which are apparent in the use of the B (N) + ve mode to express approval or disapproval. There are apparently fewer instances of the B (N) - ve mode as a result of the greater depth of characterisation in this story. Related to this is the issue of the participants' use of metaphors, and I also set out to investigate

- c) the way in which the relationship is reflected in metaphorical structures (if any).

Thirteen out of the twenty-five participants were recorded as referring to the relationship in metaphorical terms, ten of whom perceived Becka to be the powerless partner. In addition, the responses illustrated the way in which the participants used metaphors in the conventional sense to express approval or disapproval, usually due to their perception that Becka had done most of the relationship 'work'. However the participants also used metaphors which reflected the characters' respective mind-styles, and like the appearance of the B(R) + ve mode in the re-tellings indicates an understanding of the characters' way of thinking. References to Becka usually

invoked the Love is Loss of Control structure, and this insight was often used to explain her actions. By contrast, the majority of metaphors which reflected Joel's mind-style were used as a basis of disapproval. This time, the Love is War/Contest structure was invoked to again explain Becka's actions. Only rarely was the insight into Joel's mind reflected in metaphors which were not used as a basis of disapproval e.g. Participant 7f's reference to Joel's desire for freedom. These responses are predictable in view of the unusual nature of Joel's mind-style, which is inconsistent with the way in which we usually conceive of relationships. The higher proportion of responses which reflect a bias towards Becka metaphorically is a result of the participants' perception of the asymmetrical power relationship between her and Joel.

Interpretation of the characters' 'personalities' and actions is also dependent on two dimensions of the reader's experience which I have termed 'personal' and 'literary'. I predicted that certain themes might be perceptible to the feminist reader acting as triggers for a feminist reading, and I set out to investigate

- d) the apparent activation of personal and/or narrative schemata in the responses

As with the results of the preliminary study, it is in this area that the most interesting comparisons can be made. The ability to relate the text to personal experience results in a stronger and more involved response, as in the case of Participants 13f, 20f and 22m. However, this is not necessarily linked to the sex of the character, but to the ability to relate to the character's 'feelings'; as is evident in Participant 22m's comment '*I know that feeling there*'. However, the ability to relate the feelings and experiences of the characters to aspects of the readers' personal experiences does result in a stronger and less abstract response than that of Participant 22m. This is evident in Participant 20f's description of her ability to 'identify' with

Becka's anger. In addition, her description of herself as 'woman-centred' reinforces the impression that she is predisposed to perform a feminist reading, evident in her references to Joel's demands on Becka ('*almost like a baby*'). However, although she refers to aspects of Joel's egocentricity, her response is linked to her personal experiences, describing Joel's behaviour as 'typical' of men. There are however fewer references to feminist 'codes' from the participants in this study than might be expected. This might be due to the fact that there are no Women's Studies students among the participants, for whom the predisposition to read as a feminist was apparent in the preliminary study. Given the high proportion of postgraduate students of literature however, there are fewer specific references to feminist themes, although these are implicit in comments about Joel's attitude to women and Becka's dependency. References to Becka's 'martyr' or 'victim' status also appear, but are often associated with the predictability of her presentation (e.g. Participant 19f), suggesting that there is a degree of resistance to a theme which is perceived to be outdated or overfamiliar, and to characters who are 'stereotypical'. In addition, Becka's 'victim' status is complicated by her violent act of revenge; hence the opposition between those readers who perceive her to be '*too willing to please*' (Participant 9f) and those who see her as a '*spiteful psychotic*' (Participant 10m). Those readers to do refer to themes which can be seen as feminist areas of concern include Participant 8f, who comments on Joel's perception of women as '*objects (not subjects)*' a familiar subject in feminist writings, and apparent in the focus in my analysis on Joel's attitude to women. The comparison between Joel's relationship with his cat and with Becka is made by a male reader (Participant Am), and is a reflection of Joel's mind-style. However the association between Becka and Uglypuss, with the cat symbolising Becka's need to abandon her old identity, is apparently a recognition of a

feminist code (although not one that occurred to me during my analysis) and is mentioned by some of the female Participants.

The most significant aspects for the participants are Joel's 'personality' and Becka's act of revenge. The re-tellings focus on these elements, with Joel's section providing the basis for interpreting Becka's section, the comparison between the two having the potential to increase or decrease sympathy for either character. Joel's attitude to women is a significant theme which appears in the re-tellings with varying perceptions of the justification of Becka's subsequent actions. The introduction of a defenceless animal is a complicating factor, as Participant 9f comments;

ripping up his house I thought (.) fine but (.) when the cat became involved (laughs) (ls. 34-35)

There are some additional aspects which arise from this study which were not apparent in the preliminary study relating to the women's apparent desire to sympathise with the female Reflector. This is an aspect which is commented on specifically by some of the women who comment that they are predisposed to sympathise with her but are prevented by her 'victim' status, or as a result of her act of revenge. There is thus an apparent contradiction, since some of the women participants condemn Becka's powerlessness, while others condemn her attempt to gain power over Joel. It appears that women are less able to tolerate a female character who is 'unsympathetic' in some way, a tendency which might be compared with Radway's study of romance readers (Radway, 1984). The 'woman as victim' role is too familiar in women's writing, but Becka's act of revenge is too extreme, bringing sadness to both her and Joel, and evoking pity and even indignation from the readers, due to the effect on the cat. As Participant 9f comments:

I can imagine this happening - I like to read to escape mundane, everyday sadness! (ls. 4-5)

The women's apparent desire to sympathise with Becka is thus denied by this incident, and the need to be able to identify or sympathise with same-sex characters is a tendency which is not apparent in the men's responses. Although Participants 21m and 23m comment on the effect of the insight into Joel's mind on their response, none of the men express regret that they are prevented from sympathising with him as a result of his 'personality'.

The complex nature of characterisation in *Uglypuss* also prevented many of the readers from identifying the sex of the author, although Participants 6m and 1f recognised her as Atwood. This was due to the references to Canada and feminist clues in Participant 6m's case, whereas Participant 1f recognised the style of writing.

Most of the readers perceived the story to be written mainly from Joel's point of view, although Participant 19f felt that it was written mainly from Becka's. This difference in perception obviously has implications for the association between point of view and response. The fact that some readers, even if they are in the minority, can perceive the text to be written differently, can make us question the assumption that an internal perspective evokes a sympathetic response or even understanding. The fact that even one participant perceives the story to be written more from Becka's point of view than from Joel's suggests that a participant's response can, in some cases, affect the way in which they perceive the source of the narrative, rather than point of view influencing response. This is also apparent in the readers' differing perceptions of Joel's reliability. It seems likely that the participants' response to the characters affects their perception of the characters' reliability, and hence the acceptance of their point of view. For example, Participants 11m and 24m perceive Becka's actions to be unconvincing and irrational as a result of their acceptance of Joel's perception of her character.

The difficulties in attempting to analyse responses in connection with an attributional framework was noted in my discussion of the preliminary study. I subsequently discussed my reasons for abandoning attribution theory in favour of the notion of a relationship schema, which has proved more useful for analytical purposes. The difficulties inherent in the attributional framework become even more apparent in this study. For example, I noted Participants 12m's perception that *'the relationship failed because Becka tried to dominate Joel'*, and suggested that the metaphorical structuring of his response suggests the imposition of a conventional partnership metaphor; the reasons for Becka's behaviour is attributable to a 'lack of resources'. In terms of cause and effect relationships, the cause of the failure of the relationship, in Participant 12m's comments, is attributed to Becka's attempts to dominate Joel. However, how do we interpret the comments which explain her behaviour? For example, Participant 12m also comments that Becka *'doesn't have his love and respect'*. It could be argued that Joel's denial of Becka's rights to love and respect are a cause of Becka's behaviour, and hence a cause of the relationship failure. By contrast, by explaining the comments in accordance with their metaphorical underpinning, it is possible to produce a much clearer picture of the balance between the negative and positive aspects of each character's 'personality, and the motivations which the participants' perceive underlie their behaviour.

In my concluding chapter, I will compare the findings of both studies, and consider the usefulness of the frameworks which I have used in my analysis. I will consider areas which have proved problematic, and suggest ways in which they might be improved for the purposes of further research, in addition to suggesting further possible areas of investigation.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8. 1 Introduction

My aim, as set out at the beginning of this thesis, was to investigate the relationship between fictional point of view and reader response. I stated in Chapter One that I did not expect to find a straightforward relationship between the sex of a fictional character and the sex of the reader, and, indeed, the relationships are much more complex and variable than anticipated. I will begin this chapter with a summary of the findings of the studies, comparing the results of each, and suggesting reasons for the similarities and differences between them. I will also suggest areas which might merit further investigation. I will subsequently provide a critique of my methodology and of the frameworks used in the studies, and suggest areas which might be improved for the purpose of further research.

8. 2 Comparison of the Results Arising from the Studies

In many respects, the stories used in the studies are very different. Although both are by authors usually considered to be feminist, and both depict a female character as powerless in her relationship with her male counterpart, they are very different in terms of their context and settings, and the types of characters they portray. The major difference between them, of course, is the inclusion of an additional Reflector in *Uglypuss*, a feature which I anticipated would allow more male readers to engage with the text. The fact of having a female Reflector in *Lappin and Lapinova* was responsible, I argued, for the fact that some of the male participants displayed a tendency to translate Rosalind's experiences into themes of universal significance in order to be able to relate to her point of view. Rosalind's experiences within her marriage were apparently more difficult for the men to identify with than was the case with the women. This tendency is not apparent in the responses of the

male participants to the more modern Atwood story, and the fact of having both a male and female point of view apparently allows readers of both sexes to engage more fully with the text. This suggestion is reinforced by the fact that the more distanced B (N) - ve form of 'narration' is rarely apparent in the re-tellings in the comparative study, again, as a result of the fact that all of the readers appear to be able to understand and relate to the characters. This is the major difference between the findings of the two studies, and suggests that a story such as *Lappin and Lapinova* is less useful than a more modern text for three reasons;

- a) the perceived difficulty of Woolf's style is a factor in alienating some readers
- b) male readers have difficulty in relating to a female character whose experience has no relation to their own, although women readers have less difficulty in this respect
- c) related to b) is the fact that the male point of view, although capable of being recuperated, is again dated, and difficult for some readers to relate to

Despite the greater accessibility of the Atwood text however, it is not without its difficulties, which this time arise as a result of the depth and complexity of characterisation, and the fact that two points of view are in competition. Although none of the participants experienced the same difficulties with this text as with the Woolf story, the variable positive and negative aspects of characterisation produces variable responses accordingly. Readers understood the points of view of both characters, but resisted some aspects and accepted others. This is particularly noticeable with regard to Joel's point of view and reader vary in their perception of his reliability. In some respects, it might have been useful, not to say easier, to have participants read only Joel's section, thus having only one Reflector, as in *Lappin and Lapinova*. The participants would still have been provided with all of the events of the story, and would have been presented with a similar situation to that in *Lappin and Lapinova*. Becka's point of view could still be recuperated, partly as a result of the

representation of her speech in Joel's section, just as Ernest's point of view is capable of being recuperated due to the minimal insight into his thoughts.

Despite the differences outlined, there are some similarities between the findings from the studies which suggest areas which might merit further research.

8. 2 (i) The Reader's Perception of Narrative Mode

The tendency for readers to have differing perceptions of the narrative presentation is apparent in both studies. In *Lappin and Lapinova*, I argued that the B (N) Neutral mode of the framing narration is probably the reason why some of the participants perceived the implied author to have sympathy for neither character. The fact that Rosalind's viewpoint is never corroborated by the external narration gives rise to the impression of some of the participants that the implied author is detached and objective. In these cases, it is the mode of the narration which is responsible for the reader's image of the implied author and her attitude towards the characters, rather than their image of the implied author having an effect on their response. This tendency is also apparent in the responses to *Ugrypuss*, although for more complex reasons. The characterisation of Joel as egocentric resulted in many of the readers conflating the role of Joel as Reflector with that of the implied author, and responding as if this was an instance of homodiegetic narration. The strength of Joel's 'personality' gave rise to the perception that the implied author must also be male, a perception that gave rise to different responses from some of the men and women. Some of the women apparently resented the implied author's characterisation of Becka as violent and vengeful, whereas some of the men perceived Becka's characterisation to be unconvincing or irrational. However, there were also some readers who perceived Becka's point of view to be more convincing, and felt the presentation of Joel to be detached, lacking the insight into his thoughts that is

apparent in Becka's section (e.g. Participants 22m and 19f). It is possible that the difference in the way in which the characters' feelings are portrayed is responsible for the perception that Joel is presented in a more detached way; the contrast between Becka's 'pain' and Joel's apparent indifference is a reason for some of the participants' sympathetic responses to Becka. However, it is a surprising finding, given that the reader is provided with information about the thoughts and feelings of both characters, but is one which is also apparent in the preliminary study. Participant Am, for example, commented that he was presented with more 'facts' about Ernest, and not enough information about Rosalind to understand her point of view. These responses contradict our usual assumptions about the effect of point of view on response, and throws into doubt our theories about the ability of internal perspectives to elicit understanding and sympathy. It might be tempting to suggest that these responses arise as a result of the tendency to be able to identify more easily with the point of view of same-sex characters. It is impossible however to state this categorically, since both a male and female reader perceived *Ugrypuss* to be written more from Becka's point of view. The fact that readers can not only respond differently to the characters' points of view, but actually perceive the story to be written differently, is an important consideration which merits further research. While it is possible to argue that the perception of neutrality in *Lappin and Lapinova* is the reason for the perception of the author's neutrality, the fact that readers can perceive the characters to be presented in a detached manner, despite being provided with their inner thoughts, is less easily explicable.

8. 2 (ii) The Personal Resonance Factor.

In my discussion of the results of the preliminary study, I argued that the women displayed a tendency to relate to the text on a more personal level in *Lappin*

and *Lapinova*, an effect which I claimed was a result of having a female Reflector.

Women were simply more able to relate to her feelings, or to aspects of her situation, than men. This may not be the only factor, since the women who responded in this way were all either married or divorced at the time of their participation, whereas the majority of the men who were interviewed were single. Thus, the ability to relate to Rosalind's experiences within marriage may also be affected by the women's personal experiences of marriage. However, one of the men who took part and who is also married (Participant Hm) also responded on a less personal level than the women, although he did appear to be able to relate to Ernest's point of view. The crucial factor therefore appears to be the ability to be able to relate to Rosalind's experiences as a married woman, and it is this ability that is responsible for the more personal and involved responses of some of the women.

However there is also a tendency for the women to relate on a more personal level to the female Reflector in *Uglypuss*, a tendency which is not apparent in the men's responses. In my initial discussion of the responses of the comparative study, I noted that there was a tendency for the women to respond more sympathetically to both characters than was apparent in the men's responses, but that the women were also more sympathetic on average to Becka. This suggests that there is a need for women to be able to respond sympathetically to female characters, and explains their expressions of regret when they are prevented. There may be several reasons for this. Firstly, Radway's study of romance readers led her to suggest that the women she studied read to escape from the reality of their everyday lives, and this is a tendency which appears in the responses of some of the women in both the preliminary study and the comparative study. Participants Ef and Df commented on their dislike of the ending of *Lappin and Lapinova*, and Participant 19f commented that *Uglypuss* was

too realistic, that she read to '*escape ...everyday sadness*'. Although some of the men commented on the story's realism, none expressed regret that they were not provided with a sympathetic male character or a happy ending. In fact Participants Am and Mm in the preliminary study claimed to like the ending of *Lappin and Lapinova*. In many respects, the women reader's desire for satisfactory narrative closure from the female character's point of view, may be true of women's reading experiences generally. The tendency for feminist fiction to portray women as powerless victims, whose only 'escape' is suicide or madness, and the resistance to this theme apparent in the responses of some of the women, suggests that women prefer more positive female characters. In this respect, Rosalind fails due to her passivity, and Becka fails on two counts; she is powerless in her relationship with Joel, yet she acts in a violent way which is condemned by some of the women for whom her actions reduce their sympathy. The apparent desire for positive roles for women characters is also confirmed by the responses of the Women's Studies students in the re-writing experiment, for whom the characterisation of 'Jane' was 'frustrating'. A corollary of this is that in both studies, it is women participants who display the tendency to respond empathetically to the female characters, expressing their own feelings in tandem with Rosalind's and Becka's experiences in the text (i.e., Participants Ef, 13f and 20f). I noted the apparently empathetic reading of Participant 22m, who also emphasised his own feelings during the reading process. However, his comment that he relates to Becka's feelings is on a less personal level than those of the women. He comments that he recognises '*that feeling there*', but does not make the same link to his personal experience as is apparent in the women's responses. Whether this is due to a difference in the communicative styles of men and is difficult to determine, since it has been argued that women's speech is typified by the desire to share experiences

(Coates, 1996). It is possible that this tendency extends to women's descriptions of the experiences of female characters, matching their fictional experiences with their own real experiences.

8. 2 (iii) Relationship between Point of view and Participants' Use of Metaphors

There is a difference in the findings from the two studies in respect of the amount of metaphors which appear in the re-tellings. I noted that the notion of a relationship schema was a productive means of analysing the responses, due to our tendency to conceive of relationships in metaphorical terms as partnerships. However, there is apparently a greater use of metaphors in the participants' responses to *Uglypuss*, which may be due to several factors. Firstly, the readers' apparently greater ability to understand and relate to the characters, and the accessibility of the characters' points of view in *Uglypuss*, gives rise to expressions of approval and disapproval. These attitudes are expressed metaphorically in partnership terms which is a conventional way of thinking about relationship, and one which is apparent to a lesser extent in the responses to *Lappin and Lapinova*. However there is a second aspect which relates to the characters' mind-styles, and there is a large proportion of metaphor use which reflects that of the characters thought processes. The participants' ability to understand the characters' respective mind-styles is reflected in the adoption of metaphors from the story in the re-tellings, but is not necessarily an indication of approval. In this respect this finding is similar to the presence of the B (R) + ve mode in the re-tellings, which also reflects an understanding of the characters thoughts and feelings. I began this exploration with the anticipation that the participants' use of the B (R) mode would indicate a more sympathetic response, which has not been confirmed, since the insight into the characters' mind can equally be used as a

foundation for disapproval. This is apparent in both studies, and is particularly evident in responses to Joel in *Uglypuss*.

8. 2 (iv) **Literary Experience and Feminist Codes.**

I noted some concern in the preliminary study that some participants might claim to respond sympathetically to Rosalind because of their awareness of the way in which they are expected to respond, but by analysing their language use it is possible to eliminate this problem to some extent. In addition, there is sufficient variety among the responses, and in the level of training of the participants in the preliminary study, for this to remain a relatively minor concern. In particular, the fact that some of the readers claimed that the author had sympathy for neither character, despite their literary training suggests that this is not a problem. However, there is some evidence that training inhibits the expression of intuitive responses, an aspect which is apparent in the degree of similarity among the participants about the important elements of *Uglypuss*. The decision to ask readers to participate who were, for the most part, postgraduates, meant that the more idiosyncratic readings, such as that of Participant Xm for example, were absent. Similarly, the different 'personal' themes which the participants identified in *Lappin and Lapinova* relating to, for example, class issues, or marriage as security, were less evident in the comparative study. Rather, the themes which emerged in the re-tellings mirror those of the original story. In addition, the perception of the characters as stereotypical is also evidence of the participants' familiarity with similar types of writing, and is not as evident in the preliminary study responses. The style of Woolf's writing and the period in which the story is set is also a factor of course; however, we could probably predict that if the participants in the comparative study were to read *Lappin and Lapinova*, their responses would yield less diverse interpretations.

With regard to the issue of feminist codes, there is evidence in the preliminary study that training does predispose readers to read with certain expectations. This is apparent in the responses of the Women's Studies students who resisted the male point of view in the re-writing experiment, and who were confused and somewhat entertained by a story that defied their expectations of the role of men and women characters. Despite these aspects, male 'dominance' is a characteristic which persists, despite the re-writing of the story. This tendency is also apparent in the response of the other Women's Studies student who took part in the preliminary study, Participant Bf, who referred to such familiar feminist themes as the opposition between marriage as institution, and romance. However there are relatively few explicit references to feminist themes, given that both stories are by feminist authors who have recognisable styles. Certain themes are referred to in the participants' responses to *Uglympuss*, but fewer than might be expected, for three probable reasons. Firstly, and perhaps obviously, they were not asked whether or not the story was feminist, or presented feminist themes. Mills in her study, for example, specifically asked participants for their perception of the feminism in the poem. While certain feminist themes are implicit in the participants' responses to *Uglympuss*, they are not always referred to explicitly by the participants. Secondly, the length of the story, together with the questionnaire, presents a fairly lengthy task for the participants, and it is unlikely that they will have had the time to have made extensive analyses of the themes apparent in the story. The questionnaire and interview questions were focused mainly on the issue of their responses to the characters, not on their perception of feminist themes.

8. 3 Critique of Methodology

8. 3. (i) Method of Data Collection

The advantage of using an open-ended questionnaire is that it enables the participants to volunteer as much information as they deem relevant, and to provide

answers which are not obviously determined by their anticipation of what the researcher requires. In addition, this type of questionnaire yields large amounts of language data which have enabled me to analyse the responses in depth, and to assess the degree of reliability of their questionnaire responses. However, there are also problems with this method of data collection. Firstly, the desire to avoid 'leading' the participants' answers as much as possible has the potential disadvantage that participants may not provide answers which are relevant to the research issue. The relative lack of references to feminist themes in the responses is due to my decision not to include a question relating to feminism, as I wanted to assess the degree to which this element would be referred to spontaneously. The attempt to compromise between enabling the participants to volunteer information, and the temptation to prompt them into providing the information I required was not an easy problem to resolve. This is apparent in the problems inherent in the term 'sympathy' for example. I have noted my reasons for choosing this term in my discussion of the studies, and also some of the problems associated with it, and my methods of 'getting round' them. The only way of solving the problem of using a term with different associations for different people is to make the question even more open-ended. I could simply have asked the participants for their opinion of the characters; however, this may have resulted in information which could be misinterpreted. It is possible to dislike characters for whom we have sympathy, or to like characters and have no sympathy for them, as is apparent in Participant 6m's response for example.

The difficulty is also present with regard to requesting personal information. I decided only to ask questions relating to relatively innocuous background information such as sex, age, education and occupation. The fact that the question about marital status was omitted from the first version of the questionnaire suggests that this was the

right choice, since some of the participants questioned my motives for requesting this information at the interview stage. However, my decision also means that some valuable information may have been lost concerning the variables which affect responses. Sexual orientation is an obvious area which I deemed too delicate to raise unless a participant volunteered the information, which didn't happen.

There is an additional problem associated with the type of information which is elicited via the questionnaires. As noted in my discussion of the preliminary study, the format of the questionnaire results in participants producing plot summaries which are often different qualitatively from the data obtained in the interviews. Another obvious difference arises from the formality of the former situation; participants know that their written responses will be analysed, and are less aware of this during interview, especially since I used tape-recordings and made no notes. Often the interviews became informal 'chats', with the obvious result that participants were able to describe their feelings about the characters more easily. This again was noted with regard to the greater use of the B (R) + ve narrative modes in the interview data, and the fact that the 'empathetic' readings only occurred in the responses of participants who were interviewed. Sex differences also play a role in these encounters, and I often had the sense that the women participants were more at ease talking about the situation of female characters with a female researcher. There is the sense that they claim responsibility for the texts of women writers and for the fate of Rosalind and Becca, and although this is difficult to analyse objectively; their regret at not being able to identify or sympathise with the female Reflectors is a manifestation of this aspect. A corollary of this is the response of some of the men to Joel; the 'disclaimer' of Participant 23m is an example; he describes the insight into Joel's mind as

‘painful’, due to the apparent similarity of Joel’s attitudes with his own former way of thinking, and in this respect, and almost makes an apology for men.

On a more trivial note, some of the options on the questionnaire might have been phrased differently. I have already noted the problem with accepting the expressions of ‘no opinion’ of Becka from some of the female participants in the comparative study. In retrospect, allowing the participants to choose a ‘neutral’ option would have been more informative for the purposes of quantitative analysis in the tables. However, the fact that the participants were asked to provide explanations of their responses enabled me to assess their reasons for choosing the ‘no opinion’ option.. Similarly, the question about author sympathy allowed the participants to state a ‘neither’ opinion, and I noted that participants who chose this option were responding to the B (N) Neutral mode of narration. For this reason, it would have been more accurate to replace ‘neither’ with ‘neutral’, although again, the participants’ explanations of their responses proved informative.

8. 3 (ii) Analytical Framework: Characterisation

In my discussion in Chapter Two I referred to theories of characterisation which are concerned with semantic feature analysis according to the identification of ‘personality’ traits discernible in novels. However, I decided not to include this in my analysis of the stories for two reasons. Firstly, whereas it would have been a fairly simple procedure to analyse Rosalind’s ‘personality’ in accordance with our stereotypical notions of female characters of Woolf’s time and reflected in her fiction, (in fact Participant Fm provides one in his description of Rosalind as a ‘nineteen twenties..lower middle class standard female neurotic’, ls. 145-146), the task would have become more difficult in relation to *Ugypuss*, due to the complexity of Joel’s characterisation. In addition, the contrasting positive and negative aspects noted in

relation to the narrative modes would have merely been repeated in a semantic feature analysis. Becka would have been portrayed as simply lacking the features which Joel possesses and vice versa, which would have provided little in the way of new insights. Secondly, the selection of such features is subjective, as I also noted in my discussion in Chapter Two. While it is relatively unproblematic to state that a section of the narrative is in B (R) + ve mode, and reflects Joel's certainty about his opinions, is more difficult to argue, for example, that 'Joel is intelligent', or 'Becka is humorous'. The subjectivity of such opinions is apparent in the responses of the participants themselves, as illustrated by the different perceptions of Joel as 'arrogant' or 'vulnerable', or of Becka as 'victim' or 'sadist'. For these reasons I have attempted to confine my analysis to aspects of the text which can be supported by their linguistic manifestations, such as the representation of different personality aspects via different narrative modes, the over-representation of lexical items from particular semantic fields such as war and contest, and their reflection in the metaphorical structuring of the characters' mind-styles.

8. 3 (iii) Attribution Theory

I have already noted the problems with attempting to apply some of the insights from attribution theory to the participants' responses. As noted, this is problematic due to the fact that

- a) the questionnaire often yields information in the form of plot summaries, elements which the participants perceive to be important to the story structurally, and not elements which necessarily entail an attribution of blame against one of the characters, although they sometimes have that appearance; and
- b) the questionnaire in the preliminary study asks participants for their perception of the cause of the problems in *Lappin and Lapinova*. Ernest's decision to end the fantasy can obviously be seen as a cause, but, again, is not necessarily an indication of blame;
- c) Participants often use combinations of cause and effect relationships, and there are difficulties in attempting to decide whether these should be coded as person or situation attributions. For these reasons, the

attributional framework was dropped in favour of the more easily applicable and more informative notion of the relationship schema, and its associated metaphorical structuring.

8. 3 (iv) Simpson's Framework

Simpson's framework has proved extremely useful for analysing the participants' responses, providing me with a method of both comparing them to those of other participants, and to the original texts. In particular, it has allowed me to identify those textual aspects which are responsible for eliciting unexpected responses, or where textual ambiguity has given rise to different interpretations. However it is this latter aspect which has also allowed me to question some of the assumptions of the framework which had not originally occurred to me. Due to its importance for this research, I will first reconsider some of Simpson's categories, and those aspects which have caused some difficulties, subsequently returning to the implication of these for analysing the participants' responses.

Simpson's model is concerned with analysing the way in which the narrator's or Reflector's attitude is expressed in terms of modality, and it is relatively easy to find examples which illustrate the way in which the distinctions between positive and negative shading can give rise to different effects. The different types of modality are a useful foundation for my discussions of *Lappin and Lapinova* and *Uglypuss*, allowing me to discuss Rosalind's fluctuating perception of Ernest in the former story, and aspects of Joel's and Becka's 'personalities' in the latter. My discussion of the latter story in particular has integrated Simpson's model into my consideration of the character's mind-styles. Modality is an important element in assessing the characters' perceptions of the events of the story and of the other characters.

However, despite its usefulness, Simpson's framework does have some minor drawbacks, one of which is the suggestion that the highlighting of one type of

modality necessitates the suppression of others. I alluded to this in my analyses of the two stories; the oscillation between the different modes occurs as a result of the fact that the characters may express certainty in some areas and uncertainty in others. It is not possible to say that the defining feature of Joel's characterisation, for example, is his egocentricity, expressed through the foregrounding of his opinions. Both narrative modes are responsible for the sum total of his characterisation. It is true however, that the movement between the two means the temporary suppression of one type of modality in favour of another, but not throughout the story. This fact does not undermine the usefulness of Simpson's model, but suggests that the different types of modality interact to produce the 'light and shade' of characterisation, to adopt Leech and Short's term (1981:335). It is more productive to argue that positive and negative modality are related to specific aspects of characterisation rather than defining the narrative mood of the story as a whole. This does not negate the usefulness of the model, but merely reinforces Genette's observation that narratives can change their 'appearance' even over short sections (Genette, 1980:191). None of the point of view models discussed in Chapter Three can be expected to capture the narrative structure of a novel as a whole, unless the mode of narration remains consistent throughout, which is probably rare, but they can illustrate the range of potential variations in presentation of point of view.

Like *Uglypuss*, *Lappin and Lapinova* similarly is a B (R) narrative which exhibits both positive and negative modality in relatively equal amounts. Rosalind's certainty at the beginning of the story is matched by her growing uncertainty at the end, just as Becka's certainty of Joel's 'personality' and actions are combined with a growing sense of uncertainty concerning her own 'personality'. However, while modality is a useful indication of attitudes of certainty and uncertainty, it is also

important to consider who is 'speaking'. For example, the crucial aspect of *Lappin* and *Lapinova* in my reading is the (un)reliability of Rosalind's perception of Ernest. If we consider the following examples from the story, the argument should become clearer.

His nose twitched very slightly when he ate. (p.69)
 ...a nose that had never twitched at all (p.73)

Both of these are categorical assertions, and I have argued that Rosalind, the Reflector is the source of both. They do not indicate that Rosalind has changed her mind, but that she perceives Ernest differently on different occasions. Her faulty perception of Ernest accounts for her mistaken evaluation of his 'personality', and illustrates the contrast between her fantasy world and the real world, representing mutual power and subordination respectively. However both of these examples are preceded by Rosalind's act of looking at Ernest, e.g.;

She glanced at him sideways...His nose twitched very slightly when he ate (p.69)

She looked at Ernest, straight as a ramrod with a nose like all the noses in the family portraits; a nose that had never twitched at all. (p.73)

In the former example, it is the preceding sentences which lead me to interpret the perception of Ernest as belonging to Rosalind. In the latter example however, there is some ambiguity, and it could be argued that this a move into B (N) mode, with the narration describing Rosalind's act of looking at Ernest, and the comment 'a nose that had never twitched at all' belonging to the narrator. In this reading, the narration offers a position of authority from which to interpret Rosalind's perceptions, and informs the implied reader Rosalind is mistaken, whereas in my reading, the implied reader has to judge for him or herself the reliability of Rosalind's perceptions. Differences in 'speaker' assessment therefore have an effect on interpretation,

although those participants in the preliminary study who comment on this aspect of the story also perceive the interpretation of Ernest as belonging to Rosalind alone.

Potential differences in interpretation such as these are a result of the reader's perception of who is 'speaking', and obviously have repercussions for the perceived 'truth' of what is being said. If we interpret the example above as Rosalind's perception of Ernest's nose-twitching activities, then the apparently contradictory assertions in the two sentences reflect Rosalind's differing beliefs at different times. If however we perceive the statement that Ernest's nose 'has never twitched at all' to have its source in an external narrator, then it is perceived to be based on superior knowledge; i.e., the first example is B (R) + ve mode, the second could be read as B (N) + ve mode. In both readings, the statement that '(Ernest's) nose had never twitched at all', is a categorical assertion, but only in the latter example do we know with any certainty that it is 'true'. There is an issue therefore with the way in which we interpret categorical assertions, which Simpson defines as 'statements to which no doubt or uncertainty is attached (1993:60), and suggests that they are typical of the Neutral category in which the 'narrator withholds subjective evaluation and tells the story through categorical assertions alone (ibid.). However, Simpson is referring to 'extended sequences of straightforward physical description (ibid.). When this type of narration predominates, he argues, it can produce the 'flat' feel characteristic of Hemingway, for example (Simpson, 1993:68). However, it can be argued that generic sentence and sentences which express universal truths are also categorical assertions, but they are clearly anything but neutral. There is an issue therefore related to the perceived truth value of what is being stated and which is dependent upon the reader's perception of the source of the information. In an attempt to make my

meaning clearer, I will return to the example of Ernest's (non-twitching) nose. The sentence

She looked at Ernest, straight as a ramrod with a nose like all the noses in the family portraits; a nose that had never twitched at all. (p.73)

is a categorical assertion which expresses the narrator's opinion, if we assume for the purposes of argument that this is B (N) + ve mode. It could be taken as a straightforward physical description of Ernest, and it could be argued that it is more or less neutral, an instance of the type of narration which I have argued frames Rosalind's internal perspective. Apart from the description of Ernest's posture as 'straight as a ramrod', which might be described as evaluative, the narrator provides an external view of Ernest and his nose. If we return to the original reading of the sentence as B (R) + ve, it is now Rosalind's perceptions and thoughts which are represented, and it is no longer a categorical assertion, but an insight into Rosalind's mind. Rosalind's perceptions of Ernest are so variable that we cannot accept them as 'true'. A clear example of this is found in the dinner-party episode, where she sees Ernest's nose do some amazing things;

...she saw Ernest's nose twitch. It rippled, it ran with successive twitches.
(p.74)

It is easier to identify Rosalind as the source of this perception of Ernest, rather than to attribute the description to an external narrator, and lends evidence to my suggestion of her unreliability. Thus, categorisation of the narrative modes is dependent upon our perception of the source of the information, and determines our perception of their 'truth' value. This is sometimes less easily established in B (R) narratives, due to the potential ambiguity of the source of the information. We might compare the examples above with the following from Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*.

The earth is round and flat at the same time. This is obvious.

That it is round appears indisputable; that it is flat is our common experience, also indisputable. (Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*, p.81)

The source of the extract is Jordan, Dog-Woman's adopted son. As noted in Chapter Three, the novel has two narrators, both of whom exhibit unusual ways of thinking about the world they inhabit. In this example, Jordan ponders on the difference between the flat appearance of the earth and his knowledge of its roundness to utter a categorical assertion that apparently defies logic but somehow makes sense; 'the earth is round and flat at the same time'. There is no sense of irony in this statement; Jordan is the homodiegetic narrator of his section and the source of the opinions expressed. If it had been an example of B (N) + ve mode, by contrast, we would probably assume that the narrator was being ironic or humorous. Thus we can distinguish the type of categorical assertions that are 'true', (e.g. 'the man walked across the room'), from those that are only 'true' for a narrator or Reflector. In assuming that categorical assertions typify the Neutral forms of narration therefore, we most obviously distinguish those that are objective and 'true', from those that are subjective and potentially unreliable. To take an example from *Ugypuss*, the sentence 'War are fought so those in power can stay there', is a categorical assertion which also expresses an apparently universal truth. It is however Joel's opinion, yet the certainty with which it is expressed to some extent disguises this fact. We could for example argue for an alternative view, and state that wars are fought to liberate the oppressed, but this is *only* an alternative point of view. Just because no doubt or uncertainty is attached to a statement, it does not necessarily entail that they are true. An analysis of point of view using modality must therefore also take into account the identity of the 'speaker', or the source of the perception, and highlights the importance of the need to distinguish the roles of narrator, Reflector and character.

One further aspect which requires caution is the association of unmodalised narratives with neutrality. In order to discuss this, I will refer to the following example taken from Chandler's *Farewell, My Lovely*, which Simpson uses in his exemplification of the A Neutral category.

The bouncer tried to knee him in the groin. The big man turned him in the air and slid his gaudy shoes apart on the scaly linoleum that covered the floor. He bent the bouncer backwards and shifted his right hand to the bouncer's belt. The belt broke like a piece of butcher's string. The big man put his enormous hand flat against the bouncer's spine and heaved. He threw him clear across the room, spinning and staggering and flailing with his arms. Three men jumped out of the way. The bouncer went over the table and smacked into the baseboard with a crash that must have been heard in Denver. His legs twitched. Then he lay still.
(in Simpson, 1993:62)

Simpson argues that in addition to the absence of narratorial modality, the features of A neutral include the withholding of subjective evaluations in favour of categorical assertions (Simpson, 1993:62) which serves to produce a 'flat' feel to the narrative. However, 'flatness' of tone and neutrality are not necessarily linked. If we examine the passage above, it is apparent that it exhibits a high proportion of evaluative language which presumably has its source in Marlowe, the narrator. While it is unmodalised, it is also to some extent subjective, and Marlowe evaluates the actions he describes. For example, although his descriptions of the scene are focused on physical aspects, they also include adjectives which express Marlowe's perception of the protagonist and his victim; for example, the protagonist is referred to twice as 'the big man', and as having an 'enormous hand'. Combined with our stereotypical assumptions concerning the physical appearance of 'bouncers', the narration thus evaluates the relative characteristics of the protagonists; the protagonist is even bigger than the bouncer and is physically able to throw him. This aspect is therefore accentuated by the descriptions relating to the actions of the protagonists; the use of 'heaved' to describe the actions of 'the big man' is Marlowe's evaluation of the effort

involved, further reinforced in his description of the 'big man's' ability to throw his victim some distance, i.e., 'clear across the room'. The premodifier 'clear' suggests that Marlowe is impressed, awed, or frightened by the spectacle. Although we have no information about Marlowe's opinions or feelings about the incident, (they may be of admiration, fear, or disgust), we are provided with information about his perception of the events. The descriptions of the two men provide information about their relative size and strength as a result of the narrator's use of evaluative language.

In his discussion of this extract, Simpson refers to Nash's description of the narrator's style as 'cool, distanced and whimsical' (1993:62) and suggests that this impression is partly due to the 'extensive use of the A neutral category'. However, my impression of Marlowe's tone as a result of this passage is of cynicism and distaste, an impression which is not due to the 'neutrality' of the extract, but from the use of evaluative language. For example, if we look at some of the adjectives to describe the environment and characters, we can examine the source of this perception, which apparently emanates from the narrator. The description of the 'big man's' shoes as 'gaudy' is one example. The description of the floor as 'scaly linoleum' is another, suggesting that the narrator perceives his surroundings to be unclean, perhaps greasy, and/or dirty, an impression which is reinforced by the simile 'The belt broke like a piece of butcher's string'. The association of 'scaly linoleum' and 'butcher's string' are mapped on to the description of physical violence to imply a comparison between a butcher, and the 'big man's' actions, reinforced by the description of the victim's 'twitching' legs; the victim is thrown like a piece of meat. Although this is my reading of the extract and not explicitly Marlowe's viewpoint, it nevertheless arises from the narrator's use of language. He may be a passive spectator of the scene, the source of the viewing position, but he is not entirely neutral, although he may appear 'cool' and

dispassionate. For me, the ‘hard-boiled’ feel of the passage is a result of the apparent lack of pity for the victim, rather than from the ‘neutral’ modality. The problems however may be for the most part terminological; it is true that the use of modality is neutral, but evidence of subjectivity is evident elsewhere.

Neutrality is particularly difficult to isolate in relation to the B (R) mode; indeed, Simpson comments on the ‘elusiveness’ of this category (1993:73). One reason is due to the apparent inconsistency in the terminology. While the Reflector mode necessarily means that the reader has access to the Reflector’s thoughts, the association with ‘neutrality’ is anomalous; thoughts are not after all neutral. However it is possible for a Reflector to be a passive spectator, as in Simpson’s example from Joyce’s, *The Dead*,

His eyes moved to the chair over which she had thrown some of her clothes.
(in Simpson, 1993:73)

However, even in examples such as these, the information obviously has a source, and the studies discussed above suggest that the reader’s perception of the source of the narrative information is apparently affected to some extent by their response, rather than their response being affected by the source. This accounts for the tendency for readers not only to conflate the roles of narrator and Reflector, but to attribute blame to the implied author, as I discussed in Chapter Seven.

My critique of Simpson’s framework has attempted to show that the distinction between narrator and Reflector roles has an effect on the perceived ‘truth’ value of the narrative information. This brings me full circle to the discussion in Chapters Two and Three, in which I considered the informational differences of the different narrative types and ways of presenting point of view, and the potential effect on response. Although as stylisticians, we might make such fine distinctions, it is apparent from the studies that the participants’ responses to the characters affects the

way in which they interpret the narrative information. The perceived ‘truth’ value of the source of the information is sometimes dependent upon the readers’ response to the characters, rather than the narrative mode influencing their response. This is an area which merits further consideration therefore, and it is perhaps more productive to explore how readers *perceive* fictional point of view, and how it affects their response, rather than to assess their responses in accordance with the way point of view is presented in the text.

The title of this thesis is intended to illustrate this point. It is taken from Wurtzel’s *Prozac Nation*, a semi-fictionalised autobiography whose author claims that

As far as I am concerned, every word of this book is the complete and total truth. (Author’s Note).

The epigram, taken from the Talmud, emphasises her awareness of the unreliability of her perceptions, as she details her clinical depression from early adolescence into adulthood. Her point of view, she suggests, is unreliable, due to her inability to ‘see’ things as they really are. The responses of the participants in these studies suggest that, to some extent, our assumptions and disagreements about the effect on response of different types of point of view may be less relevant than we think. They show that readers often perceive the texts to be written differently according to their response to the characters, and that although their response is affected by literary experience, it appears to be affected more strongly by their personal experiences. We might say that they ‘see’ fictional point of view as they are, rather than as it is.

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Appendices

Lappin and Lapinova

THEY were married. The wedding march pealed out. The pigeons fluttered. Small boys in Eton jackets threw rice; a fox terrier sauntered across the path; and Ernest Thorburn led his bride to the car through that small inquisitive crowd of complete strangers which always collects in London to enjoy other people's happiness or unhappiness. Certainly he looked handsome and she looked shy. More rice was thrown, and the car moved off.

That was on Tuesday. Now it was Saturday. Rosalind had still to get used to the fact that she was Mrs. Ernest Thorburn. Perhaps she never would get used to the fact that she was Mrs. Ernest Anybody, she thought, as she sat in the bow window of the hotel looking over the lake to the mountains, and waited for her husband to come down to breakfast. Ernest was a difficult name to get used to. It was not the name she would have chosen. She would have preferred Timothy, Antony, or Peter. He did not look like Ernest either. The name suggested the Albert Memorial, mahogany sideboards, steel engravings of the Prince Consort with his family—her mother-in-law's dining-room in Porchester Terrace in short.

But here he was. Thank goodness he did not look like Ernest—no. But what did he look like? She glanced at him sideways. Well, when he was eating toast he looked like a rabbit. Not that anyone else would have seen a likeness to a creature so diminutive and timid in this spruce, muscular young man with the straight nose, the blue eyes, and the very firm mouth. But that made it all the more amusing. His nose twitched very slightly when he ate. So did her pet rabbit's. She kept watching his

A HAUNTED HOUSE

of course in the full blaze of the station lamps it was plain—she was quite an ordinary, rather elderly, woman, travelling to London on some ordinary piece of business—something connected with a cat, or a horse, or a dog. She reached for her suit case, rose, and took the pheasants from the rack. But did she, all the same, as she opened the carriage door and stepped out, murmur "Chk., Chk." as she passed?

nose twitch; and then she had to explain, when he caught her looking at him, why she laughed.

"It's because you're like a rabbit, Ernest," she said. "Like a wild rabbit," she added, looking at him. "A hunting rabbit; a King Rabbit; a rabbit that makes laws for all the other rabbits."

Ernest had no objection to being that kind of rabbit, and since it amused her to see him twitch his nose—he had never known that his nose twitched—he twitched it on purpose. And she laughed and laughed; and he laughed too, so that the maiden ladies and the fishing man and the Swiss waiter in his greasy black jacket all guessed right; they were very happy. But how long does such happiness last? they asked themselves; and each answered according to his own circumstances.

At lunch time, seated on a clump of heather beside the lake, "Lettuce, rabbit?" said Rosalind, holding out the lettuce that had been provided to eat with the hard-boiled eggs. "Come and take it out of my hand," she added, and he stretched out and nibbled the lettuce and twitched his nose.

"Good rabbit, nice rabbit," she said, patting him, as she used to pat her tame rabbit at home. But that was absurd. He was not a tame rabbit, whatever he was. She turned it into French. "Lapin," she called him. But whatever he was, he was not a French rabbit. He was simply and solely English—born at Porchester Terrace, educated at Rugby; now a clerk in His Majesty's Civil Service. So she tried "Bunny" next; but that was worse. "Bunny" was someone plump and soft and comic; he was thin and hard and serious. Still, his nose twitched. "Lapin," she exclaimed suddenly; and gave a little cry as if she had found the very word she looked for.

"Lapin, Lapin, King Lapin," she repeated. It seemed to suit him exactly; he was not Ernest, he was King Lapin. Why? She did not know.

When there was nothing new to talk about on their

long solitary walks—and it rained, as everyone had warned them that it would rain; or when they were sitting over the fire in the evening, for it was cold, and the maiden ladies had gone and the fishing man, and the waiter only came if you rang the bell for him, she let her fancy play with the story of the Lappin tribe. Under her hands—she was sewing; he was reading—they became very real, very vivid, very amusing. Ernest put down the paper and helped her. There were the black rabbits and the red; there were the enemy rabbits and the friendly. There were the wood in which they lived and the outlying prairies and the swamp. Above all there was King Lappin, who, far from having only the one trick—that he twitched his nose—became as the days passed an animal of the greatest character; Rosalind was always finding new qualities in him. But above all he was a great hunter.

"And what," said Rosalind, on the last day of the honeymoon, "did the King do to-day?"

In fact they had been climbing all day; and she had worn a blister on her heel; but she did not mean that.

"To-day," said Ernest, twitching his nose as he bit the end off his cigar, "he chased a hare." He paused; struck a match, and twitched again.

"A woman hare," he added.

"A white hare!" Rosalind exclaimed, as if she had been expecting this. "Rather a small hare; silver grey; with big bright eyes?"

"Yes," said Ernest, looking at her as she had looked at him, "a snailish animal; with eyes popping out of her head, and two little front paws dangling." It was exactly how she sat, with her sewing dangling in her hands; and her eyes, that were so big and bright, were certainly a little prominent.

"Ah, Lapinova," Rosalind murmured.

"Is that what she's called?" said Ernest—"the real Rosalind?" He looked at her. He felt very much in love with her.

"Yes; that's what she's called," said Rosalind. "Lap-
inova." And before they went to bed that night it was
all settled. He was King Lappin; she was Queen Lap-
inova. They were the opposite of each other; he was
bold and determined; she wary and undependable. He
ruled over the busy world of rabbits; her world was a
desolate, mysterious place, which she ranged mostly by
moonlight. All the same, their territories touched; they
were King and Queen.

Thus when they came back from their honeymoon
they possessed a private world, inhabited, save for the
one white hare, entirely by rabbits. No one guessed that
there was such a place, and that of course made it all
the more amusing. It made them feel, more even than
most young married couples, in league together against
the rest of the world. Often they looked slyly at each
other when people talked about rabbits and woods and
traps and shooting. Or they winked furtively across the
table when Aunt Mary said that she could never bear
to see a hare in a dish—it looked so like a baby: or
when John, Ernest's sporting brother, told them what
price rabbits were fetching that autumn in Wiltshire,
skins and all. Sometimes when they wanted a game-
keeper, or a poacher or a Lord of the Manor, they
amused themselves by distributing the parts among
their friends. Ernest's mother, Mrs. Reginald Thorburn,
for example, fitted the part of the Squire to perfection.
But it was all secret—that was the point of it; nobody
save themselves knew that such a world existed.

Without that world, how, Rosalind wondered, that
winter could she have lived at all? For instance, there
was the golden-wedding party, when all the Thorburns
assembled at Porchester Terrace to celebrate the fiftieth
anniversary of that union which had been so blessed —
had it not produced Ernest Throburn? and so fruitful
—had it not produced nine other sons and daughters
into the bargain, many themselves married and also
fruitful? She dreaded that party. But it was inevitable.

As she walked upstairs she felt bitterly that she was an
only child and an orphan at that; a mere drop among
all those Thorburns assembled in the great drawing-
room with the shiny satin wallpaper and the lustrous
family portraits. The living Thorburns much resembled
the painted; save that instead of painted lips they had
real lips; out of which came jokes; jokes about school-
rooms, and how they had pulled the chair from under
the governess; jokes about frogs and how they had put
them between the virgin sheets of maiden ladies. As for
herself, she had never even made an apple-pie bed.
Holding her present in her hand she advanced toward
her mother-in-law sumptuous in yellow satin; and to-
ward her father-in-law decorated with a rich yellow
carnation. All round them on tables and chairs there
were golden tributes, some nestling in cotton wool;
others branching resplendent—candlesticks; cigar boxes;
chains; each stamped with the goldsmith's proof that
it was solid gold, hall-marked, authentic. But her pres-
ent was only a little pinchbeck box pierced with holes;
an old sand easter, an eighteenth-century relic, once
used to sprinkle sand over wet ink. Rather a senseless
present she felt—in an age of blotting paper; and as
she proffered it, she saw in front of her the stubby black
handwriting in which her mother-in-law when they
were engaged had expressed the hope that "My son will
make you happy." No, she was not happy. Not at all
happy. She looked at Ernest, straight as a ramrod with
a nose like all the noses in the family portraits; a nose
that never twitched at all.

Then they went down to dinner. She was half hidden
by the great chrysanthemums that curled their red and
gold petals into large tight balls. Everything was gold.
A gold-edged card with gold initials intertwined recited
the list of all the dishes that would be set one after
another before them. She dipped her spoon in a plate
of clear golden fluid. The raw white fog outside had
been turned by the lamps into a golden mesh that

blurred the edges of the plates and gave the pineapples a rough golden skin. Only she herself in her white wedding dress peering ahead of her with her prominent eyes seemed insoluble as an icicle.

As the dinner wore on, however, the room grew steamy with heat. Beads of perspiration stood out on the men's foreheads. She felt that her icicle was being turned to water. She was being melted; dispersed; dissolved into nothingness; and would soon faint. Then through the surge in her head and the din in her ears she heard a woman's voice exclaim, "But they breed so!"

The Thorburns—yes; they breed so, she echoed; looking at all the round red faces that seemed doubled in the giddiness that overcame her; and magnified in the gold mist that enshrouded them. "They breed so." Then John bawled:

"Little devils! . . . Shoot 'em! Jump on 'em with big boots! That's the only way to deal with 'em . . . rabbits!"

At that word, that magic word, she revived. Peeping between the chrysanthemums she saw Ernest's nose twitch. It rippled, it ran with successive twitches. And at that a mysterious catastrophe befell the Thorburns. The golden table became a moor with the gorse in full bloom; the din of voices turned to one peal of lark's laughter ringing down from the sky. It was a blue sky—clouds passed slowly. And they had all been changed—the Thorburns. She looked at her father-in-law, a furtive little man with dyed moustaches. His foible was collecting things—seals, enamel boxes, trifles from eighteenth-century dressing tables which he hid in the drawers of his study from his wife. Now she saw him as he was—a poacher, stealing off with his coat bulging with pheasants and partridges to drop them stealthily into a three-legged pot in his smoky little cottage. That was her real father-in-law—a poacher. And Celia, the unmarried daughter, who always nosed out other people's secrets, the little things they wished to hide—she

was a white ferret with pink eyes, and a nose clotted with earth from her horrid underground nosings and pokings. Slung round men's shoulders, in a net, and thrust down a hole—it was a pitiable life—Celia's; it was none of her fault. So she saw Celia. And then she looked at her mother-in-law—whom they dubbed The Squire. Flushed, coarse, a bully—she was all that, as she stood returning thanks, but now that Rosalind—that is Lapinova—saw her, she saw behind her the decayed family mansion, the plaster peeling off the walls, and heard her, with a sob in her voice, giving thanks to her children (who hated her) for a world that had ceased to exist. There was a sudden silence. They all stood with their glasses raised; they all drank; then it was over.

"Oh, King Lappin!" she cried as they went home together in the fog, "if your nose hadn't twitched just at that moment, I should have been trapped!"

"But you're safe," said King Lappin, pressing her paw.

"Quite safe," she answered.

And they drove back through the Park, King and Queen of the marsh, of the mist, and of the gorse-scented moor.

Thus time passed; one year; two years of time. And on a winter's night, which happened by a coincidence to be the anniversary of the golden-wedding party—but Mrs. Reginald Thorburn was dead; the house was to let; and there was only a caretaker in residence—Ernest came home from the office. They had a nice little home; half a house above a saddler's shop in South Kensington, not far from the tube station. It was cold, with fog in the air, and Rosalind was sitting over the fire, sewing.

"What d'you think happened to me to-day?" she began as soon as he had settled himself down with his legs stretched to the blaze. "I was crossing the stream when——"

"What stream?" Ernest interrupted her.

"The stream at the bottom, where our wood meets the black wood," she explained.

Ernest looked completely blank for a moment.

"What the deuce are you talking about?" he asked. "My dear Ernest!" she cried in dismay. "King Lappin," she added, dangling her little front paws in the firelight. But his nose did not twitch. Her hands—they turned to hands—clutched the stuff she was holding; her eyes popped half out of her head. It took him five minutes at least to change from Ernest Thorburn to King Lappin; and while she waited she felt a load on the back of her neck, as if somebody were about to wring it. At last he changed to King Lappin; his nose twitched; and they spent the evening roaming the woods much as usual.

But she slept badly. In the middle of the night she woke, feeling as if something strange had happened to her. She was stiff and cold. At last she turned on the light and looked at Ernest lying beside her. He was sound asleep. He snored. But even though he snored, his nose remained perfectly still. It looked as if it had never twitched at all. Was it possible that he was really Ernest; and that she was really married to Ernest? A vision of her mother-in-law's dining-room came before her; and there they sat, she and Ernest, grown old, under the engravings, in front of the sideboard. . . . It was their golden-wedding day. She could not bear it.

"Lappin, King Lappin!" she whispered, and for a moment his nose seemed to twitch of its own accord. But he still slept. "Wake up, Lappin, wake up!" she cried.

Ernest woke; and seeing her sitting bolt upright beside him he asked:

"What's the matter?"

"I thought my rabbit was dead!" she whimpered. Ernest was angry.

"Don't talk such rubbish, Rosalind," he said. "Lie down and go to sleep."

He turned over. In another moment he was sound asleep and snoring.

But she could not sleep. She lay curled up on her side of the bed, like a hare in its form. She had turned out the light, but the street lamp lit the ceiling faintly, and the trees outside made a lacy network over it as if there were a shadowy grove on the ceiling in which she wandered, turning, twisting, in and out, round and round, hunting, being hunted, hearing the bay of hounds and horns; flying, escaping . . . until the maid drew the blinds and brought their early tea.

Next day she could settle to nothing. She seemed to have lost something. She felt as if her body had shrunk; it had grown small, and black and hard. Her joints seemed stiff too, and when she looked in the glass, which she did several times as she wandered about the flat, her eyes seemed to burst out of her head, like currants in a bun. The rooms also seemed to have shrunk. Large pieces of furniture jutted out at odd angles and she found herself knocking against them. At last she put on her hat and went out. She walked along the Cromwell Road; and every room she passed and peered into seemed to be a dining-room where people sat eating under steel engravings, with thick yellow lace curtains, and mahogany sideboards. At last she reached the Natural History Museum; she used to like it when she was a child. But the first thing she saw when she went in was a stuffed hare standing on sham snow with pink glass eyes. Somehow it made her shiver all over. Perhaps it would be better when dusk fell. She went home and sat over the fire, without a light, and tried to imagine that she was out alone on a moor; and there was a stream rushing; and beyond the stream a dark wood. But she could get no further than the stream. At last she squatted down on the bank on the wet grass, and sat crouched in her chair, with her hands dangling

empty, and her eyes glazed, like glass eyes, in the fire-light. Then there was the crack of a gun. . . . She started as if she had been shot. It was only Ernest, turning his key in the door. She waited, trembling. He came in and switched on the light. There he stood, tall, handsome, rubbing his hands that were red with cold.

"Sitting in the dark?" he said.

"Oh, Ernest, Ernest!" she cried, starting up in her chair.

"Well, what's up now?" he asked briskly, warming his hands at the fire.

"It's Lapinova . . ." she faltered, glancing wildly at him out of her great startled eyes. "She's gone, Ernest. I've lost her!"

Ernest frowned. He pressed his lips tight together. "Oh, that's what's up, is it?" he said, smiling rather grimly at his wife. For ten seconds he stood there, silent; and she waited, feeling hands tightening at the back of her neck.

"Yes," he said at length. "Poor Lapinova . . ." He straightened his tie at the looking-glass over the mantelpiece.

"Caught in a trap," he said, "killed," and sat down and read the newspaper.

So that was the end of that marriage.

Solid Objects

THE only thing that moved upon the vast semicircle of the beach was one small black spot. As it came nearer to the ribs and spine of the stranded pilchard boat, it became apparent from a certain tenuity in its blackness that this spot possessed four legs; and moment by moment it became more unmistakable that it was composed of the persons of two young men. Even thus in outline against the sand there was an unmistakable vitality in them; an indescribable vigour in the approach and withdrawal of the bodies, slight though it was, which proclaimed some violent argument issuing from the tiny mouths of the little round heads. This was corroborated on closer view by the repeated lunging of a walking-stick on the right-hand side. "You mean to tell me. . . . You actually believe . . ." thus the walking-stick on the right-hand side next the waves seemed to be asserting as it cut long straight stripes upon the sand.

"Politics be damned!" issued clearly from the body on the left-hand side, and, as these words were uttered, the mouths, noses, chins, little moustaches, tweed caps, rough boots, shooting coats, and check stockings of the two speakers became clearer and clearer; the smoke of their pipes went up into the air; nothing was so solid, so living, so hard, red, hirsute and virile as these two bodies for miles and miles of sea and sandhill.

They flung themselves down by the six ribs and spine of the black pilchard boat. You know how the body seems to shake itself free from an argument, and to apologize for a mood of exaltation; flinging itself down and expressing in the looseness of its attitude a readiness to take up with something new—whatever it may be that comes next to hand. So Charles, whose stick had

**Appendix 2 – Preliminary Study Questionnaire,
Majority Version**

Thankyou for agreeing to take part in this study.

Our aim is to investigate the different ways in which readers respond to stories. People often disagree about the meaning of a story, and the questions which follow are an attempt to enable us to understand the ways in which different readers respond to texts.

You may take as long as you need to complete the test, and you may take breaks. However, please do not discuss the story with anyone else until you have finished. What is most important is your own response to the story.

Do not read forward in the test until you have completed the stage you are working on.

Remember, there are no `right' or `wrong' answers. We are only interested in the meaning that the story has for you.

In order for us to have some general background information, please answer the following questions by ticking the relevant boxes.

Sex	Male	Female
	[]	[]

Age	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 65
	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Education	Secondary	Further	Higher	Other (Please Specify)
	[]	[]	[]	[]

Occupation

I would be willing to be interviewed at a later stage if necessary	yes	no
	[]	[]

If yes, please give name and telephone number

Section 1

Sometimes you will be expected to tick the relevant box. At other times, you will be asked to give reasons for your answer. Remember this is not a test of whether your answer is 'right' or 'wrong'. We are only interested in the way people respond to stories.

Read the story just as you would normally.
 There is no limit to the number of times you may read the story, but please do not read forward until you have completed the section you are working on.

1. In a few sentences, give a summary of what the story is about.

2. Did you enjoy the story?	yes	no
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please try to give reasons for your answer to question 2

4. With which character do you sympathise most?

Ernest	Rosalind	both	neither
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please try to give reasons for your answer to question 4

6. The story has been divided into sections. Can you identify any particular section(s) which support your answer to question 4?
 (You need only answer a, b, etc.)

7. With which character do you think the author sympathises?

Ernest Rosalind both neither

[] [] [] []

8. Please try to give reasons for your answer to question 7

**9. Can you identify any particular sections which support your answer to question 7?
(eg. a, b, etc.)**

**9. In your opinion, what is the cause of the problems experienced by Ernest and
Rosalind?**

**10. Can you identify any particular sections which support your answer to question 9?
(eg. a, b, etc)**

Section 2

Please indicate which of the following statements corresponds most closely to your own opinion.

Circle the appropriate number.

11. Rosalind becomes obsessed with her imaginary world and neglects her husband.

totally disagree		not sure		totally agree
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

12. Ernest neglects his wife and fails to participate in her imaginary world.

totally disagree		not sure		totally agree
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

13. Rosalind should make an effort to take her share of the responsibilities of marriage

totally disagree		not sure		totally agree
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

14. Ernest should relax and enjoy the imaginary world he helped his wife to create

totally disagree		not sure		totally agree
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

15. The story describes the insensitivity of a husband to the emotional world of his wife

totally disagree		not sure		totally agree
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

16. The story shows the insensitivity of men to the emotional needs of women.

totally disagree		not sure		totally agree
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

17. The story describes the inability (or unwillingness) of a wife to cope with the reality of married life

totally disagree		not sure		totally agree
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

18. The story shows the inability (or unwillingness) of women to cope with the reality of life in general.

totally disagree		not sure		totally agree
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

19. Earlier, you were asked which character you felt most sympathy for.

Questions 11- 18 may have offered you an alternative interpretation of events. Have you changed your original opinion?

Circle the appropriate number.

completely		not sure		not at all
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

Section 3

20. The story is by Virginia Woolf. Does this have any effect on your interpretation of the story?

yes	no
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. If you answered yes to question 20, can you give reasons?

22. Have you read the story before?	yes	no
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. If you answered yes to question 22, please specify whether this was

a) for pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) as part of a course	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Have you read anything by Virginia Woolf before?	yes	no
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

25. If you answered yes to question 24 please specify whether this was

a) for pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) as part of a course	<input type="checkbox"/>

26. Please indicate the kind of literature you read normally for pleasure

Appendix 3: Preliminary Study Questionnaire with Sympathy Scale

Part One

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

I am going to ask you to read a short story and then to answer questions about your response to the story. I am interested in the fact that readers can read the same story yet sometimes arrive at different interpretations. The questions which follow are an attempt to investigate what factors influence people in their reading.

The story concerns the relationship between a man and woman, Ernest and Rosalind. I would like to know what the story means to you, and how you may have arrived at this meaning. Your interpretation may not be the same as that of any other reader, and there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers.

In order for me to have some general backgroun information, please answer the following questions by ticking the relevant boxes.

Sex		Male	Female
		[]	[]

Age	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 65
	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Education	Secondary	Further	Higher	Other (Please Specify)
	[]	[]	[]	[]

Status	Single	Partner	Married	Divorced	Other
	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }

Nationality

First Language

Occupation

Have you studied literature as part of a course?	Yes	No
	[]	[]

If yes, please specify

Please indicate below any writers or kinds of writing that particularly interest you.

Which writers or kinds of writing have you read most of in the past two years?

Do you read literature for pleasure?	often	sometimes	never
	[]	[]	[]
Do you read literature for study/ work purposes?			
	[]	[]	[]
Do you read theoretical works about literature for pleasure? (eg. literary theory, literary criticism, stylistics)?			
	[]	[]	[]
Do you read theoretical works about literature for study/work purposes?			
	[]	[]	[]

Please use the space below if you wish to add any further comments about your reading habits.

Part Two

Please read the story now.

Read the story as you would do normally. You can read it as often as you wish, and return to it if required when completing the questionnaire.

Sometimes you will be asked to tick the relevant boxes. At other times you will be asked to give reasons for your answer. Remember this is not a test of whether your answer is 'right' or 'wrong'. I am only interested in your personal response.

1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

2. Did you enjoy reading it?

very much

[]

quite a lot

[]

ok

[]

not much

[]

not at all

[]

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

3. How would you describe Ernest?

4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

very sympathetic	fairly sympathetic	no opinion	fairly unsympathetic	totally unsympathetic
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Please try to give reasons for your answer

Use a red pen to underline any part(s) of the passages which help to explain your answer.

5. How would you describe Rosalind?

6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

very sympathetic	fairly sympathetic	no opinion	fairly unsympathetic	totally unsympathetic
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Please try to give reasons for your answer

Use a blue pen to underline any parts of the passages which help to explain your answer.

7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

Rosalind	Mostly Rosalind	Both Equally	Mostly Ernest	Ernest	neither
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Please try to give reasons for your answer

8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

9. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

Please tick the relevant box to indicate whether you would prefer at a later date to either

a) discuss your responses individually with the researcher []

b) take part in a discussion group. []

Please provide your name and telephone number below.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Appendix Four: Participant Profiles, Preliminary Study

Participant	Age group	Education	Literature (Training)	Literature (Pleasure)	Occupation
Xm	16-25	Secondary	None specified	Terry Pratchett, Jack Higgins, Information books, crime, war	Driver Ex- forces
Am	26-35	Higher	'A' level English literature	Horror, science fiction, thriller, suspense, spy	unemployed
Bf	16-25	Further (Higher)	B.A. English Literature M.A. student in English Literature and Women's Studies	Women's contemporary fiction	student
Cf	36-45	Higher	Access Course English Literature	Feminist oriented books (novels, theory, religion) Fiction – Jean Ariel Brunton, Non-fiction; mainly feminist autobiographies	student
Ef	36-45	Further	None specified	Non fiction Autobiographies	Nursery nurse and housewife
Fm	26-35	Higher	'O' Level	History literature, novels, s.f.	chemist
Gf	36-45	Higher	'O' Level	History, linguistics, Archeology psychology, religious studies, historical fiction s.f fantasy poetry, cookery gardening	Lecturer in computing
Hm	46-55	Secondary	Non specified	History of Celtic football club The Life of Ernest Bevin (founder of the T & GWU)	Admin assistant
Im	36-45	Further	None specified	Biographies, fiction-Garham Greene, Dick Francis	Journalist

Lm	56-65	Further	None specified	Travel autobiographies Biographies, Historical novels M M Kaye, Maeve Binchy Rosamunde Pilcher	
Mm	26-35	Higher	English, German French 'A' level 19 th and 20 th C French and German literature	Science Fiction, travel, humour	Student teacher
Nm	36-45	Higher	Degree in English Language and Literature	F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jane Austen, John Buchan classic adventure stories <i>39Steps</i> , and American novels	Not specified
Of	36-45	Higher	Degree in literature	Detective fiction, s.f. non fiction, autobiographies	Teacher
Pf	16-25	Higher	English Literature Degree	'whatever'	Editorial assistant
Qm	26-35	Secondary	None specified	None specified	Security officer
Rm	36-45	Higher	Degree in literature	Joseph Conrad Paul Scott	Not specified
Sf	16-25	Further	'A' level literature	Not specified	student
Tf	56-65	Further	None specified	Classics, Hardy etc.	retired
Um	46-55	Higher	English, Latin, Greek	Modern – Waugh, Perleman	Lecturer
Vf	36-45	Higher	19 th Century	any	unemployed

Appendix Five: Interview Questions, Preliminary Study

1. Do you have any objection to being tape-recorded?
2. One question which was omitted from the questionnaire concerned marital status. Have you any objection to providing this information now?
3. Please re-read the story to re-familiarise yourself with it, marking any places in the text which remind you of either;
 - a) your own experience
 - b) something you have been told about or read about.
4. What are your feelings at the end of the story? What do you think happens next?
5. How true to life/realistic do you think the story is?
reasons?
6. Have you marked any places in the text as you read? What significance do they have for you?
7. Here are some of the interpretations which could be applied to the story.
Read through them and mark on a scale of one to seven your feelings about how accurate they are.
8. Does reading the different interpretations make you feel differently about the story in any way? Have you changed your own original interpretation at all?
9. Ask why?/ why not?
10. Read the description of Rosalind. Are there any qualities that have been included which you think should not have been? Any you would like to add?
11. Read the description of Ernest. Are there any qualities that have been included which you think should not have been? Any you would like to add?
12. Are there any comments you would have liked to make about the story but were not given the opportunity?
13. Do you have any general comments about the questionnaire itself?

De-briefing

Background of Woolf/ the story - handout?

Appendix Six: Preliminary Study Questionnaire and Interview Transcripts

Transcription Conventions:

- Brackets = unclear or inaudible language eg. (), or non-linguistic noises eg. (laughs), or my notes, e.g. (reader looks through text)
- (.) = Indicates pause, sometimes denoted in seconds e.g. (2)

Participant Am - Questionnaire responses

Q. 1. In a few sentences, try to explain what the story is about.

1. A. The story to me is basically about how marriage changes once the so called
2. magic has gone. The characters come from different backgrounds, appear to have
3. little in common with each other in the real world and seemingly suggests that
4. opposites don't always attract in the long term. On a par with this I think it is also a
5. story which could be about depression and lack of sympathy, care and attention to
6. the signs of it.

Q. 2. Did you enjoy the story?

7. A. not much

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

8. The story in my opinion although well written was turgid. I found myself reading it
9. from a passive detached point of view rather than a feeling of being involved as in a
10. fly on the wall. Although it is a short story it seemed to drag and to me and
11. seemed to be twice as long as it actually was. Perhaps because of this it gave the final
12. sentence much greater impact with its sense of finality due to its brevity. I
13. particularly liked the matter of factness of it and the no doubt intended irony as I
14. suspect Ernest would have approved of its clinicalness!

Q. 3 With which character do you sympathise most?

15. A. both

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

16. A. I sympathise with them both for different reasons. It seems to me that there is
17. very little communication between them in a normal sense. Ernest and Rosalind
18. only seem as one in their secret world. He married Rosalind because he loved her
19. unaware that she hates his family so much her depression only lifts completely
20. when she imagines the worst of them. He would probably like a large family but
21. Rosalind is unwilling or unable to which would put a strain on both their lives.
22. Rosalind it would appear is under tremendous pressure and would appear to be on
23. the edge of a nervous breakdown not helped by Ernest's snap out of it attitude
24. towards the end, by which time they are both in an empty marriage.

Q. 4 With which character does the author sympathise most?

25. A. Rosalind

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

26. A. The author creates an air of sadness depression loneliness and helpless feelings
 27. for Rosalind both in reality and in her dreamworld. Also in her physical features
 28. and demeanour a similar portrayal and a certain innocence is given. Rosalind is
 29. also an only child and appears to have no relatives on her side or friends. Where
 30. others find warmth and happiness in a situation the author isolates Rosalind from
 31. these feelings. This contrasts starkly with Ernest's character, who isolates himself
 32. from Rosalind's feelings more and more as the story continues, leaving her in the
 33. end emotionally dead towards him and likewise he to her.

Q. 5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

34. A. As I mentioned in question one they come from different backgrounds and to
 35. me Rosalind is not 100% sure why she married Ernest and the invention of Lappin
 36. and Lapinova was a means of evading the doubt while on their honeymoon. Also
 37. Rosalind is fighting for Ernest's affections against his feelings for his mother and
 38. ultimately loses, as he becomes colder and more distant after his mother's death.
 39. Rosalind on the other hand spends more time in her dream world which is fast
 40. becoming a nightmare. In a nutshell they have different outlooks backgrounds
 41. mentalities and are childless.

Participant Am - interview

R- initially could not relate the story to any aspect of his own experience or to similar stories.

1.V. what were your feelings at the end what did you think happened next
 3.R. what happened next
 4.V. be polite
 5.R. er (laughs)
 6.V. ()
 7.R. (laughs) er what happened next well I guess in those days they wouldn't have
 8. got divorced would they (.) they would just er have ended up as a dead
 9. marriage I would imagine
 10.V. right
 11.R. I would have thought
 12.V. so you think they stayed together
 13.R. yeah (.) I do
 14.V. right (.) how realistic do you think it was
 15.R. (1) er (2) I don't think it was (2) that (.) well it was realistic in the sense that er
 16. I suppose they fell out (.) with each other (.) erm (.) in a way (.) that's probably
 17. realistic but there's a story then (.) with a sort of (.) dreamland scenario one
 18. thing and another (.) that didn't seem too realistic to me really
 19.V. ok (.) so the sort of fantasy bit (.) was it
 20.R. yeah (.) and the way that it seemed that because that finished (.) the marriage
 21. finished
 22.V. yeah
 23.R. sort of didn't seem realistic because what's going on (.) on the outside of that
 24. dreamworld (.) between them she didn't really er (.) go on about much when
 25. she was writing it just (.) centred round the dreamworld and his family (.) but
 26. not very much about his family
 27.V. right
 28.R. apart from the fact that she didn't like them so

- 29.V. yeah
 30.R. (laughs)
 31.V. ok (1) so there aren't many things (.) you didn't (.)I'm supposed to have asked
 32. you to mark something in the text that had any significance but you said it
 33. didn't so
 34.R. ah (.) let's see (.) let's have a look
 35.V. anything that you kind of (.) thought was (.) particularly relevant or significant
 36.R. to which question
 37.V. (.) to anything to anything in your own experience anything that
 38.R. to my experience
 39.V. struck you as important (.) or relevant or particularly sort of (.) erm (1) I don't
 40. important to the story itself (.) I suppose it's
 41.R. well (.) you see (.)
 42. there's things in erm (1) like (.) I get (.) the impression that (.) she didn't want
 43. to (.) she wasn't sure why she married him in the first place if (.) from what I
 44. can gather of the story really and I still don't know having read it why she did
 45. (.) marry him (.) because er (.) they've got absolutely nothing in common (.)
 46. and she said somewhere (.)in the story that erm they were complete opposites
 47.V. yeah
 48.R. that they were the opposite of each other (.) he was (.) bold and determined
 49. and she was (.) wary and undependable
 50.V. yeah
 51.R. so I mean I know (.) it's the case in real life they say opposites attract is a
 52. cliché don't they
 53.V. mm
 54.R. but (.) er (.) there's nothing in this story apart from her dreamworld and him (.)
 55. er joining into it at the beginning (.) apart from that they seem to have
 56. absolutely nothing in common at all
 57.V. right
 58.R. he said (.) er she's not sure if she would have ever got used to (.)
 59.V. mm
 60.R. the name Ernest for instance (.) and then er (.) later on it goes into the story (.)
 61. the honeymoon for example (.)got married (.) she just wasn't happy (.) but we
 62. don't know why she wasn't happy (.) or anything (.) she just suddenly
 63. becomes not happy unless she's in this dreamworld
 64.V. mm
 65.R. (1) and yet he loved her
 66.V. yeah
 67.R. doesn't he
 68.V. yeah
 69.R. so (.) am I wittering on a bit
 70.V. no no (.)
 71.R. (laughs)
 72.V. (laughs) just keep talking
 73.R. right
 74.V. the worst thing I (.) ever have is people that just say yes and no (laughs)
 75.R. right (laughs)
 76.V. right ok (.)
 77.R. well (.) you want to (.) do you want to know if it's relative to any experiences
 78. I've
 79.V. yeah anything that (.) there was (.) in there that you thought (.) it just struck a
 80. chord or (.) you thought oh that (.) that (1) erm (.) similar to something that
 81. happened (.) there wasn't any (1)
 82.R. mm (1)
 83.V. I mean it doesn't matter it just

- 84.R. no
 85.V. (.) I I'll tell you why later
 86.R. go on
 87.V. no no
 88.R. no later yeah
 89.V. yeah
 90.R. I'm just trying to think (3)
 91.V. there doesn't have to be
 92.R. (.) think
 93.V. if anything occurs to you (.) later
 94.R. right go on then I'll I'll (.) keep (.)
 95.V. I've got to show you these now (2) it's a one to seven scale (.) of
 96 interpretations that have been applied to the text ok
 97.R. yeah
 98.V. so you've got to circle which one you think (.) you agree with most
 99 (.) one is totally agree (.) seven is totally agree (sic)
 100.R. right
 101.V. and that's kind of (.) the not sure (.) you've probably done these before
 102.R. yeah
 103.V. so that's Rosalind becomes obsessed with her imaginary world
 104.R. er give her at least er (.) six out of seven for that yeah seven (.) seven
 105. I would say
 106.V. (2) Rosalind neglects her husband
 107.R. (1) er (1) let's have a think (.)
 108. now then (2) I (3) well I'd put I'm not sure because when you read the story it
 109. (.) it (doesn't really go on much about the personal life) apart from that
 110. dreamworld and (they fall apart) (.) I'd put (.) I'd put erm (1) five for that (.) I
 111. get the impression she does
 112.V. ok (.) Ernest fails to participate in the imaginary world
 113.R. (1) er (2) well he does at the beginning and he doesn't at the end doesn't he so
 114.V. right (laughs)
 115.R. so er
 116.V. well we can put
 117.R. three
 118.V. at the end if you want
 119.R. ah
 120.V. three
 121.R. er (.) yeah
 122. (.) cos he does agree er (.) well he does (.) I put it there (.) three because (1)
 123. er
 124.V. right (.) Ernest neglects his wife
 125.R. (1) er (1) he loved her (laughs)
 126.V. (laughs)
 127.R. at the beginning (.) which is more than she ever said to him
 128.V. yeah
 129.R. er
 130.V. but neglect
 131.R. er neglects her in other ways (1) er (1) yeah go on then (.) I'll I agree (.) give
 130. her six for that
 131.V. six (.) you don't have to agree (laughs)
 132.R. no (.)
 133.V. Rosalind makes no effort to share in the responsibilities of marriage
 134.R. (2) yeah I'll
 135. give six for that
 136.V. Ernest loses interest in the imaginary world he helped to

137. create
 138.R. ()
 139.V. () so totally agree
 140.R. yeah
 141.V. right (.) the story describes the insensitivity
 142. of a husband to the emotional world of his wife
 143.R. (1) well from that point of er
 144. (.) of view er I'd have to agree with (.) that
 145.V. right (.) that totally
 146.R. no not
 147. totally er hang on let's think the story describes (3) well it does really doesn't it
 148. I think (.) to me anyway (.) yeah
 149.V. right so
 150.R. er (.) seven (.) go on
 151.V. right (1) the
 152. story shows the insensitivity of men to the emotional needs of women
 153.R. (3) well
 154. now then (2) well (.) whatever
 155.V. (laughs)
 156.R. five (.) go on (.) just er (.) hedge my bets
 157. there
 158.V. ok (.) not many
 159.R. no it's alright
 160.V. (.) the story describes the inability of a wife to cope
 161. with the realities of married life
 162.R. well not being married but I'd er (.) I'd
 163. certainly give that a six I would say (.) but I'm not married
 164.V. the story describes the unwillingness of a wife to cope with the realities of
 165. married life (.) that's (.) different inability and unwillingness
 166.R. yeah (1) er (.) well
 167. (.) I'd still give it (.) six because (.) the way I saw it was er she seemed inable
 168. (.) unable to er (.) cope with reality and therefore (.) I never got the
 169. impression she was willing to do (.) cope (.) but (.) I don't know (.) they keep
 170. referring to her sewing all the time and (.)
 171.V. (laughs) she'd nothing else to do
 172.R. no that's true
 173.V. (.) the story describes the inability of women in
 174. general to cope with the realities of life
 175.R. er (.) no I (.) I I'd totally disagree with
 176. that statement
 177.V. (.) the story shows the inabil inability of men in general (.) to
 178. attend (.) to the emotional needs of women
 179.R. (1) men in general to attend
 180.V. uh huh
 181.R. (2) well I think he tried (.) so I'm gonna give him five
 182.V. (1)right (.) ok
 183.R. oh just (.) that question there
 184.V. which one
 185.R. there (.) bottom (.)
 186. seven and eight (1) to the emotional world (10) describes (.) to the emotional
 187. world of his wife (3) er (2) I suppose it does from (.) the writer's point of
 188. view (.) anyway (.) maybe (.)
 189.V. well I suppose it's an attempt to generalise (.)
 190. from the story
 191.R. yeah

- 192.V. you take the (.) situation in the story and (.)
 193.R. yeah
 194.V. generalise from it so (1) as distinct from what the writer
 195.R. yeah
 196.V. intended to do
 197.R. well fair enough then I'll (.) stick with that then (.)
 198.V. how about that
 199.R. the story
 200. shows the insensitivity of men to the emotional needs (2) well I'm nearer to (.)
 201. agreeing with it than not agreeing with it so
 202.V. right (.) so five (.) something like
 203. that
 204.R. yeah
 205.V. ok (.) great (1) how would you describe (.) Rosalind (.) if you had
 206. to describe her (.) to someone
 207.R. oh I think she was (.) I think she was er (.)
 208. sort of er (.) what can we say (1) er (.) I think emotionally she's (.) sort of
 209. upset (.) to say the least
 210.V. uh huh
 211.R. somehow (.) er I don't think she can't get a
 212. grip with reality (2) maybe it's to do with the fact that she's an orphan
 213.V. yeah
 214.R. and that she was an only child (.) so she's never had the er (.) sort of (.) learned
 215. the skills of how to er (.) sort of really love someone (.) as she's growing up (.)
 216. because everyone will have come (.) and gone which probably (.) affects her
 217. now and in her marriage (.) and that (.) then she was an orphan on her own (.)
 218. you dream when you're a child don't you when you're on you (.) make up (.)
 219. things to
 220.V. uh huh
 221.R. sort of (.) occupy the time and I suppose that's what she
 222. was doing as well (.) in her marriage
 223.V. right
 224.R. and er (.) but she lived in that
 225. world more than (.) the real world
 226.V. yeah
 227.R. so when her husband did come home
 228. (.) from work and she was left at home sewing as it were (.) er she couldn't
 229. start (.) she wanted to (.) him staying in her world rather than (.) she join in his
 230.V. right
 231.R. possibly but
 232.V. yeah
 233.R. did that (.) have I answered that question
 234.V. yes (.) you
 235. have (.) thank you
 236.R. seem to have gone beyond (laughs)
 237.V. no (.) that's brilliant (.)
 238. now what about Ernest (.) how would you describe Ernest
 239.R. (.) er (.) well I
 240. think because he loved her he was willing to er (1) join in her dreamworld I
 241. think he got fed up with her in the end when he realised that she was (1) always
 242. in this dreamworld and he wanted her to (.) her to join him in reality a bit more
 243. (.) and talk about what he was doing or his interests were maybe I don't know
 244. (.) but I think er the way he's described in the story (.) seems to sum it up (.)
 245. erm (.) in er she describes him as (.) anyway (.) he was thin hard and serious
 246.V. mm

- 247.R. and er (.) now that does contradict (.) the bit at the beginning where
 248. (.) he uses the word love (.) which you wouldn't expect (.) a man to (.) use
 249. in that sense when he's been described also as thin hard and serious
 250.V. right so
 251. that bit where you say he felt very much in love with her
 252.R. yeah (.) yeah (.) so it
 253. affected him seriously but at the same time externally anyway he was thin
 254. hard and serious but
 255.V. mm
 256.R. his character changed when his mother died
 257.V. yeah
 258.R. you could argue that (.) he then became er (.) a bit more (.) erm (.) withdrawn
 259. (.) a bit like (.) Rosalind did but he did it a different way (.) his (.) exterior (.)
 260. hardness then became interior hardness as well (.) possibly
 261.V. mm
 262.R. it's lower
 263. down
 264.V. yeah (.) because he had to take over the family
 265.R. yeah (2) but he didn't get
 266. (.) he didn't really bother with the family much either he (.) apart from dos (.) I
 267. don't think
 268.V. yeah
 269.R. when they had the party
 270.V. yeah
 271.R. describes the relationship (2)
 272. I'm not sure (.) I can't find
 273.V. I don't know if it (.) describes his relationship with
 274. his family (.) does it
 275.R. no it doesn't much (.) no (1) there's so much it doesn't
 276. describe
 277.V. mm
 278.R. to my mind (1) anyway (.) anyway but he did seem to take
 279. over (.) gives that impression anyway that
 280.V. mm
 281.R. he did seem to be (.)
 282. (impression) of taking over probably
 283.V. yeah (1) you know when you read those interpretations
 284.R. mm
 285.V. did that have any
 286. effect on what you said before about which character (.) you felt sympathy for
 287. (.) you had sympathy for both of them I think
 288.R. (1) I did (.) yeah and yet (1) the
 289. more I think about (.) it's a sort. of (.) it's strange but (.) how you use the
 290. word sympathy really er (.) I feel sorry for Rosalind in one sense (.) purely (.)
 291. probably (.) because I think (.) now (.) she's a (.) she's an orphan (.) you know
 292. and er (.) what affected her in her childhood (.) how she survives in life (.) now
 293. (.) and in the story is because of what happened to her (.) being an orphan
 294.V. mm
 295.R. and I feel sorry for her (.) in that sense but (.) on the other hand (.) given
 296. her situation of er (.) she's married a (.) by all accounts a good looking man
 297. who's quite a catch as it were
 298.V. mm
 299.R. shall we say he's (.) it would appear
 300. reading between the lines (.) she's not happy mentally (.) but erm (1) sort of
 301. physically (.) er she should be in the sense the way he looks (.) the wealth that

302. he's got
 303.V. mm
 304. and everything she should be quite comfortably off you know (.) but
 305. if you're not mentally happy then (.)
 306.V. yeah
 307.R. (you can start) to change that (.) so
 308. I feel sorry for her in that way (.) but she doesn't seem to be making much of
 309. an effort to try to act for herself
 310.V. yeah (.) so you feel sort of (.) you feel sorry
 311. for him as well
 312.R. I do yeah yeah
 313.V. yeah
 314.R. again going back to this bit because
 315. (.) in the whole story (.) he's the only (1) he says he actually loves her as
 316. well (.) not anywhere in the story does she say (s)he loves him
 317.V. mm
 318.R. and er (.) I think he's giving it his best shot at the beginning you know like
 319. entering her world and everything and I think she just (.) gives up trying and (.)
 320. then when his mother (.) dies he realises he can't rely on her for any (.)
 321. emotional comfort that he may need
 322.V. mm
 323.R. and so he just goes (.) cold (1)
 324. towards her (.) so (.) I feel sorry for him in that way as well (.) but er
 325.V. but you don't like the word sympathy (.) you don't (.) what (.) what
 326.R. well I mean in the sense that (.) you can sympathise in (.) that way but you
 327. look at those two as a couple (.) in the time when this story was written (.) how
 328. many ever years ago (.) there's people working down mines and women
 329. working in mills twelve hours a day so (.) in that sense you (.) it's trying to feel
 330. (.) making yourself feel sorry for someone (.) that has got a lot of things going
 331. for them which
 332.V. mm
 333.R. most people in those days wouldn't have had going for
 334. them if you see what I mean so (.) that's how I (.) I look at the word sympathy
 335. in that sort of sense
 336.V. yeah
 337.R. you see what I mean
 338.V. yeah
 339.R. but in the context of the
 340. story
 341.V. yeah
 342.R. erm (.) I feel sorry for them both I suppose in a (.) to a certain extent
 343. yeah (.) I think
 344.V. yeah (1) are there any comments you'd have liked to make
 345. about the story (laughs)
 346.R. (laughs)
 347.V. that I can repeat (.) that you weren't given
 348. space to on the questionnaire
 349.R. er (.) er (.) no (1) apart from what I wrote first
 350. time round
 351.V. do you want to look at the
 352.R. yeah (.) refresh my memory (.)
 353. probably contradicted everything I've (.) written now (laughs)
 354.V. no (.) you
 355. haven't
 356.R. (.) oh right (.) erm I (laughs) right (.) er (12) oh I did sympathise

357. with both
358. didn't I so I (did so again so that was alright)
- 359.V. (laughs) you're
360. allowed to contradict yourself
- 361.R. (laughs) er (8) well I just (.) like I wrote at the
362. time really(.) it's just a (.) to me it's a totally boring story and (1) to be (.) to
363. be (.) I don't think it would even (.) well I don't know (.) would it get
364. published today (.) I don't know
- V. (discussion - choice of story)
- 365.R. yeah (.) I mean it's like (.) she had this idea(.) and er (.) to me anyway wrote it
366. and then thought well I don't know it's a bit (.) to me it was just (2) every
367. time I read it (.) I really had to (.) after the first two pages I had to really force
368. myself to read it (.) I mean I (.) the one thing she does do is she does make
369. it (.) depressing I suppose (laughs)
- 370.V. mm
- 371.R. which is what it's er (.) the story is
372. about (.) in that sense (.) erm (.) well (.) er (.) two people aren't happy so (.)
373. that comes across (.) but it's just (.) such hard work (.) reading it really (.) to
374. my mind (laughs) I don't (.) I kept thinking well is it (.) is it because it's
375. photocopied would I have liked it better if I'd have seen it in a book I don't
376. know well (.) no (.) I just thought it was really (.) boring and it (.) like (.) your
377. questions have made it more interesting than what (.) I'd have ever have thought
378. it was anyway you know in that sense (.) you should er (.) prefix this with your
379. questions
- 380.V. (laughs)
- 381.R. really make it much more interesting
- 382.V. somebody asked me if I'd written it
- 383.R. yeah (laughs) no (.) I wouldn't accuse you of doing anything as bad as this
- 384.V. (.) er (.) what about the questionnaire
385. R. oh right
- 386.V. (laughs) now you're allowed to
387. criticise
- 388.R. right (.) the questionnaire
- 389.V. was there anything you found particularly
390. difficult
- 391.R. well because er (every questionnaire I've ever done) even whether
392. it's for er (.) washing powder things like that (.)they always er (.) have to (.)
393. link the questions up closely to try and get the answer
- 394.V. mm
- 395.R. so that people
396. don't stray too much (.) but when you are (.) filling in a questionnaire (.) you
397. always think well doesn't that (.) haven't I just answered that question
- 398.V. mm
- 399.R. but then you read it again (.) the question always means something different
400. (.) it's just er (.) after reading that story it's hard to find something different to
401. write in for the following question but that's not the questionnaire's fault it's
402. the story's fault really (.) I feel
403. V. mm
- 404.R. er
- 405.V. (1) what about the underlining bits (.) was
406. that (.) a bit of a (.) chore
- 407.R. no (.) no (.) it helped me (.) because er (.) it kept
408. me (.) it gave me something to focus on while I was (.) reading it
- 409.V. mm
- 410.R. if you like (.) to try and er (.) with a story as boring as this you do need to

411. er (.) underline things to make them stand out because (.) otherwise (.) it (.)
 412. the way (.) it reads (.) you think now where did I read that then you have to
 413. go (.) back to the beginning and read the middle as well (.) and it picks
 414. things out (.) because the other thing that baffled me I mean you may know the
 415. answer to this (.) is she was obsessed with paws (.) and hands all the time
 416.V. mm
 417.R. as well
 418.V. mm
 419.R. which I couldn't work out (.) I couldn't (.) get that one
 420.V. well I (.)
 421. before I did this I did (.) an analysis of it and
 422.R. yeah
 423.V. and (.) I sort of (.) it's not
 424. finished yet (.) and I picked out all the reasons why
 425. everybody would sympathise with Rosalind and one of the reasons is because
 426. you (.) you're drawn into this imaginary world
 427.R. yeah
 428.V. and she becomes a rabbit
 429.R. yeah
 430.V. which I think is where all the paws and the (.) and the (.) eyes and
 431. everything fits in
 432.R. yeah yeah (.) yeah I noticed that yeah I realised in her own
 433. imagination she becomes a rabbit but
 434.V. I I think it's a (.) deliberate (.) sort of (.)
 435.R. yeah
 436.V. thing to try and make you see her
 437.R. (.) yeah
 438.V. as she sees herself
 439.R. yeah (.) even in the
 440. real world
 441.V. yeah
 442.R. sort of thing yeah because (.) that's what I thought but (.)
 443. erm what was I I underlined it just this morning as well a bit that I missed (.) I
 444. thought er (1) that's right (4) yeah erm (.) there (.) there at the beginning she
 445. says under her hands (.) she was sewing (.) he was reading (.) sort of thing
 446.V. mm
 447.R. and er (.) and she didn't (.) not (.) as opposed to in her imagination (.)
 448. she just put under her hands you know whereas (.) if I'd have been writing it
 449. (.) logically as it were (.) not that I'd (.) be able to write anything like this (.) I
 450. mean not that I could write anything better for that matter but (.) what I mean
 451. is (.) normally they'd say er (.) under her hands she was sewing he was reading
 452. (.) they became very real very (.) vivid very amusing (.) Ernest (.) put down the
 453. paper helped her (.) they were (.) there were the black rabbits and the red it
 454. goes on and on erm
 455.V. yeah that's the bit a bit that I picked out as (1) I mean the story's (.) oh I can
 456. tell you the theory now you've more or less finished
 457.R. yeah
 458.V. the questions
 (discussion of theory)
- 447.R. ... on the other hand you see like feminism (.) in a sense (.) again it started after
 448. all er with Emily Pankhurst and everything she was middle class she wasn't a
 449. millworker fighting for rights of women
 450.V. yeah (.) hadn't the time
 451.R. no

452. hadn't got the time no and er (.) if you like (.) er nor did they have the vote
 453. nor did anyone er women in those days but (.) er educationally they didn't they
 454. weren't educated either to (.) fight a good argument either you know
 455.V. mm
 456.R. to sort of combat the middle classes ruling classes it had to come (.)
 457.V. mm
 458.R. from the ruling classes within if you like to (.)
 459.V. mm
 460.R. over turn it erm it could never come from (.) (.)
 461.V. yeah
 462.R. (1) yeah but that's why er it's like er (.) that's come from the so called er (.)
 463. intellectual
 464.V. mm
 465.R. er (.) feminine
 466.V. mm
 467.R. sort of (.) quarters I would think
 468.V. who had the time to do it and the money
 469.R. yeah (.) well exactly yeah (.) yeah (.) and the (.) likewise there were just as
 470. many women that would have been anti it anyway (.) you know
 471.V. mm
 473.R. say you're rocking the boat I mean we're quite happy (.)
 474.V. mm
 475.R. as we are (.) but I mean er that (.) this story to me I know (.) it doesn't strike
 476. me as being er (.) a feminist story in the sense that (.) she's bored at home (.)
 477. and er she's got nothing else to do
 478.V. mm
 479.R. but live in a dreamworld (.) the impression I got was she's been living in a
 480. dreamworld since she was an orphan if you like and that (.) and she stayed that
 481. way I I can't see (.) any clues in there that (.) say that she had something else
 482. to do bar sit and home and sew that (.) she would have done anything else (.) I
 483. don't know
 484.V. yeah
 485.R. can you give me a clue
 486.V. (laughs)
 487.R. as to (.) whether she could have done
 488.V. er well I didn't look at it from that (.) point of view (.) I I looked at it from the
 489. point of view (.) that (.) she had to get married (.) presumably (.) some people
 490. have said that (.) possibly she was (.) kind of in a governess situation she was
 491. from a lower class and married into this family and that was the only alternative
 492.R. yeah
 493.V. er which I I didn't think that was the case (.) personally
 494.R. no
 495.V. but I I did get the impression that (.) there wasn't seen to be any alternative
 496. apart from marriage
 497.R. mm
 498.V. and and it to me (.) what was (.) particularly (.) vivid was the images of
 499. entrapment and (.) you know
 500.R. yeah
 501.V. and being caged in and
 502.R. yeah
 503.V. especially towards the end (1) where the rooms are shrinking and it's
 504.R. yeah
 505.V. because he won't give her this (.) freedom (.) and in
 506.R. yeah I see what you mean like yeah (.) she's being
 507.V. I mean you're right I mean what else (.) could she have done really women

- 508 didn't work
 509.R.no
 510.V. it was written in 1939
 511.R. right
 512.V. erm (.) so (.) it was kind of round that time I suppose there were changes
 513.R.yeah
 514.V. you know because women were going out to work but she wouldn't have done
 515 I presume she would have stayed I don't know (.) making scarves or
 516 something (laughs)
 517.R. (laughs) yeah
 518.V. you know
 519.R. or er (.) yellow lace curtains
 520.V. yeah
 521.R. they seemed popular but er probably not that was the nightmare
 522.V. mm
 523.R. but erm
 524.V. yeah
 525.R. yeah but you see in saying that like you say it's written in 1939 (.) this woman
 526. here doesn't (.) er Rosalind doesn't give me the impression that she'd be going
 527. to work in the munitions factory during the second world war for instance you
 528. know
 529.V. no
 530.R. or possibly (.) become a a land girl (.) as they were called either (.) er (.) but
 531.V. but I don't I (.) don't think it's set then (.) that's when it was written
 532.R. yeah
 533.V. I think it's probably set sort off(.) nineteen twenties
 534.R. ah I see right
 535.V. I imagine I imagine it was that kind of
 536.R. right era
 537.V. yeah
 538.R. but ah ah yeah let's think (.) I see what you mean like at the end that the room
 539. was drawing in on her and and like that and that's a (.) a sign of entrapment but
 540. it also sounds to me like she's about to have a nervous breakdown
 541.V. mm
 542.R. as well (laughs)
 543.V. mm
 544.R. you know (.) reading it from the other point of view
 545.V. right
 546.R. er (.) so (.) do you think then that erm (.) Ernest didn't give her enough space
 547. then (.) to do things (.) or do
 548.V. erm I don't know whether it's Ernest's (.) I mean I I couldn't (.)
 549.R. you think it's just society
 550.V. mm (.) I think because there's no alternative
 551.R. mm
 552.V. I mean you're right about the thing about did she love him or did she not love
 553. him
 554.R. mm
 555.V. or did he (.) I mean (.) that (.) did his nose really twitch (.) I don't know (.)
 556. perhaps she just imagined it
 557.R. yeah imagined it
 (my discussion of Ernest's nose twitching)
 558.R. no you see that (.) that is it in a nutshell it's so annoying I mean I (.) she
 559. obviously wrote (.) wrote it in a sense (.) for (.) you (.) to er sort of er (.)
 560. reader to decide I don't know but (.) I found that really frustrating in that

561. (.) there just wasn't enough (.) little clues before and sometimes in between
 562. you know
 563.V. mm
 564.R. and then she just suddenly (.) from being on her honeymoon (.) that winter (.)
 565. she was desperately (.) unhappy (.) you know
 566.V. yeah
 567.R. but er up until then (.) we don't really know why she was unhappy (.) because
 568. er he was still (.) entering her dreamworld
 569.V. mm
 570.R. erm (1) as far as we we were aware of (.) and then (.) she's about to go to er
 571. (.) the fiftieth wedding anniversary (.) and she's terribly unhappy
 572.V. isn't that because she doesn't see his nose twitch
 573.R. er (.) let's
 574.V. erm (1) right
 575.R. er (.) let's have a look
 577.V. yeah (.)
 578.R. (.) come back from honeymoon they possessed a private world
 579.V. yeah but page seventy three when they're going to the dinner party
 580.R. yeah
 581.V. she says erm (.) she looked at Ernest straight as a ramrod
 582.R. mm
 583.V. with a nose like all the noses in the family portraits a nose that never twitched
 584. at all
 585.R. yeah

(general discussion)

- 586.V. mm
 587.R. she was only happy when she was thinking them ill
 588.V. mm
 589.R. that family
 590.V. mm
 591.R. but er (3) let's see (1) of course (.) there was that thing that (.) I remember
 592. talking about (.) before (.) about the fact that (.) there was no children in the
 593. marriage
 594.V. mm
 595.R. and er (.) he came from a large family
 596.V. that's right
 597.R. and er (2)
 598.V. yeah and
 599.R. as well
 600.V. it was very fruitful wasn't it
 601.R. yeah (.) they were (.) and like rabbits have a reputation shall we say
 602.V. mm
 603.R. and yet (1) it didn't come about
 604.V. thought it was very interesting what you said about rabbits and hares because
 605. it hadn't occurred to me that maybe they couldn't breed (reference to previous
 606. conversation)
 607.R. yeah (.) yeah I still don't know the answer (laughs)
 608.V. no I don't either (laughs) I'll have to find out (.) I shall give you an
 609. acknowledgement
 610.R. get on to the Natural History department at (.) the University and
 611.V. mm
 612.R. see cos (.) I just don't know the answer to that
 613.V. yeah because I mean if (.) if she knew that and she wrote that that would be

614. a very important part of the story and if she didn't know then
 615.R.mm
 616.V.it makes no difference
 617.R.I was thinking that even this morning again when I read it I wonder (.) because
 618. er people used to eat rabbit more in those days
 619.V. mm
 620.R. they might have known more about rabbits generally speaking you know (.)
 621. whereas
 622.V. mm maybe yeah
 623.R. you don't see rabbits much (.) these days (.) foodwise (.) er and the other thing
 624. (.) that I couldn't work out which maybe you could help me with is (.)
 625. unless it's just to do with the significance of er (.) the family home (.) but (.)
 626. she didn't like (.) anything to do with gold or anything at all did she
 627.V. I think that was their wealth wasn't it (.) because (.) there's a bit where she's
 628. walking up to give the present to her mother in law and
 629.R. yeah
 630.V it says it's only a sand (.) caster or something
 631.R .yeah
 632.V.
 (pause as tape ran out)

633.R.I mean I think steel engravings are cold (.) miserable if you like (.) but I would
 634. think(.) mahogany sideboards are (.) quite nice
 635.V. m
 636.R. if you like er (.) that's er (.) a matter of taste isn't it
 637.V. yeah
 638.R. it's like she's rejecting it and (.) they may be nice to some people but she
 639. doesn't want them to be nice in her world
 640.V. mm
 641.R. I mean (.) as I say her world her dreamworld (.) even when she's enjoying it
 642 at the beginning (.) it's always er (.) foggy and misty
 643.V. mm
 644.R. you know
 645.V. mm
 646.R. whereas most people a dreamworld (.) would have the sun out (.) I would
 647 imagine
 648.V. mm
 649.R. erm
 650.V. there's that one bit where the sun's. shining I think that's at the dinner (.) you
 651. know (.) at the dinner party
 652.R.yeah yeah (.) the sun shines then because er
 653.V. mm
 654.R. she's thinking ill of everyone else isn't she
 655.V. yeah yeah
 656.R. erm but
 657.V. you know I hadn't thought about (.) I mean you're right (.) it's just a matter
 658. of interpretation (.) whether you think that (laughs) lace curtains and (.) and
 659 sideboards are (.) are boring (laughs)
 660.R. I mean er you look at (.) Dickensian (.) sort of thing er I don't know say like
 661. (.) erm (.) a christmas carol or something (.) everyone's in a nice warm house
 662 at (.) at Christmas you know and the fire's glowing and
 663.V. mm
 664.R. er whatnot and er (.) the poor people if you like are walking outside it and
 665. they're only dreaming that they could have (.) er such a comfortable place to
 666. go you know (.) er is the way I see it

(discussion of theory)

- 667.R. I do sympathise with him because of that you see because (.) and if anything (.)
 668. that's why I lose a bit of sympathy for Rosalind because he (.) states you know
 669. that well she says (.) the author (.) does that
 670.V. mm
 671.R. he does love her
 672.V. mm
 673.R. you know but (.) nowhere in the text does (.) she state that (.) (s)he loves
 674. him (.) you know er (.) that I can find anyway (.) not not as up front as that
 675. anyway so

(my discussion - change of perspective)

- 676.R. yeah (.) well it's true erm
 677.V. mm
 678.R. with her there's nothing as (1) nothing so bold as in black and white with her
 679. feelings towards him (.) you see
 680.V. mm
 681.R. as obvious as that (.) is all hidden in this er dreamworld
 682.R. it's er (.) without knowing exactly (.) how she came to meet him and
 683. why she married him you know
 684.V. mm
 685.R. you can't really (.) tell
 686.V. yeah
 687.R. but I mean (.) as much as er (.) to me the key line of (.) Ernest saying erm (1)
 688. oh er (.) that he (.) he loved her (.) the other one is that (.) the only other clue
 689. we've got about Rosalind that is as (.) obvious is that she was an orphan
 690. (laughs)
 691.V. mm mm
 692.R. and an only child (.) you know (.) and (.) that's why I then tried to base what
 693. I thought about her from (.) from that (.) if anything as well you know
 694.V. mm
 695.R. as to why she came into the dreamworld
 696.V. so we haven't got enough about (.) the the (.) context really
 697.R. no (.) it's just like you're taken (.) it's like trying to look at somebody's life
 698. (.) and then just taking a year out of that life without taking into effect what
 699. went on before it sort of thing the previous (.) however long it was you know
 700.V. uh huh
 701.R. I mean er (.) for instance somebody could be married twenty years and then
 702. they get divorced (.) but (.) we only know about the previous six months
 703. before the divorce rather than the previous nineteen years you know
 704.V. right yeah
 705.R. and it may be that erm (.) the children have been killed in a car accident or
 706. something like that and er (.) they they're so (.) emotionally (.) upset about it
 707. that they don't get on any more they can't comfort each other all sorts of
 708. things you know
 709.V. mm mm
 710.R. that (.) can lead to a divorce or whatever
 711.V. yeah
 712. but in this we don't know why (.) it's come up to er (.) even getting married

(discussion - actor v observer)

- 713 R. I'd like to have been a fly on the wall that's how I sort of read it from a

714. detached point of view

715.V.mm

716.R.in that erm (.) it (.) it didn't (.) it didn't suck me into it and (.) like (.) the way

717. the story's written is that she's telling you certain things (.) but not much

718. about what you want to know about

719.V. mm

720.R. from my point of view I was reading it thinking (.)well I (.) I wonder what she

721. was like before this or I wonder what he was like (.) before that

722.V.mm

723.R.why did they meet and (.) what have you you know yeah (.) I didn't empathise

724. in that sense like (.)

725.V mm

726.R erm but I

727.V so you were observing them

728.R. yeah (.) exactly (.) yeah

(general discussion)

729.R. but like er (.) so for instance (.) I don't know whether it's because of the way

730. I read it then but

731.V.mm

732.R.you're having to guess what (.) I feel anyway I'm having to guess what

733. Rosalind's up to in her dreamworld whereas er (.) Ernest (.) erm he's written

734. about (.) everything's more of a fact (.) if you like

735.V. mm

736.R.er like (.) he did love her (laughs)

737.V. mm mm

738.R. he he was hard (.) and thin nosed and all the rest of it whereas er

739.V. mm

740.R. I mean I yeah you're right it's interesting that isn't it

741.V.yeah it is interesting

742.R.mm golly

Participant Bf -Questionnaire responses

Q. 1. In a few sentences, try to explain what the story is about.

1. A. The idea of love and the imagination in romance and the institution of marriage.
2. What happens when the emotions becomes institutionalised. Opposition between the
3. imagination and rationalism.

Q. 2. Did you enjoy the story?

A. OK

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

4. A. The tone of the story was rather irritating and it was a bit predictable but quite
5. amusing and sweet.

Q. 3. With which character do you sympathise most.

6. A. neither.

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

7. A. I suppose because they were both annoying - two extremes in opposition at the
8. end. Love in stories is annoying anyway. Re-inforced (?) stereotypes.

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

9. A. neither

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

10. A. Her tone is ironic and superior as if she is laughing at both the characters and
11. marriage/love as institutions.

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

12. A. They both fall into the trap of romance and then separately realism. The
13. extremes of which separate them.

Participant Bf - interview

1. V. if you'd like to have a quick flick through it (.) just to refresh your
2. memory (1) I should have actually put it in your pigeon hole
(minute and a half pause as Participant re-reads story)
3. V. erm one thing I didn't put on the questionnaire was about marital
4. status (.) you're single
5. R. yeah
6. V. people seem to think there's some sinister
7. reason for asking there isn't
8. R. oh
9. V. it's just (.) background information (.)
10. erm (.) was there anything in the text that reminded you of your own
11. experience (.) or something that you'd heard about (.) or something
12. that you'd read about (.) anything that (.) kind of struck a chord
13. R. (1) erm (.)
14. V. or was it just totally (alien to you in terms of experience)
15. R. (stuff we've done) romantic fiction
16. V. yeah
17. R. (tape indistinct -R- speaks very quietly but suggests that the story
reminds her of other bits of romantic - fantasy fiction though she can't be specific.)
18. R. (involved in this kind of romance fantasy I can't remember it now but
19. V. yeah
20. R. but I remember thinking at the time () something like that Mills
21. and Boon something like that this kind of ()
22. V. yeah (.) ok so it's not (.)
23. it's more (.) fictional stuff that you've read not (.) not (.) to do with
24. your own life there's nothing there that you can (.)
25. R. mm (.) no not really
26. V. ok (.) what were your feelings at the end of the story (.) what did you
27. think might happen next (.) don't know if you can remember the ending
29. R. erm (4) well I think I mean I just thought they kind of (.)
30. (pathetic - continued together - bored) (laughs)
31. V. yeah (laughs)
32. R. erm (.) kind of their romance had gone (obviously)
33. V. yeah (.) how (.)
34. how (.) realistic do you think it was was it quite true to life
35. R. erm (.) I
36. suppose (1)
37. V. yeah (1) erm (.) right so there wasn't anything in the text
38. that you thought was (.) particularly (.) you sort of thought yeah that's
39. (.) realistic or
40. R. erm (.) I thought it was quite realistic in the way it kind of
41. it was all of that romantic kind of stuff and then it it just kind of went
42. V. yeah
43. R. yeah I thought that was realistic
44. V. yeah (1) er (1) these are some of the
45. interpretations that have been put to the story (.) I wonder if you'd just
46. mind (.) seeing how far you agree with some of them
47. R. yeah
48. V. it just
49. means (.) there's a (.) scale of one to seven (.) one is totally disagree (.)
50. seven is totally agree (.) and then (.) there's sort of a scale in between
51. R. uh huh
52. V. so the first one is (.) Rosalind becomes obsessed with her

53. imaginary world (.) I don't know whether you would (.) totally agree
 54. with that or (.) totally disagree
 55.R. mmm I guess er (.) five
 56.V. five (1) Rosalind neglects
 57. her husband
 58.R. mmm (1) I'd put one for that
 59.V. disagree
 60.R. mmm
 61.V. ok (1) Ernest fails to
 62. participate in the imaginary world
 63.R. mmm (2) probably two ()
 64.V. ok (.) some people made a distinction between the beginning and the
 65. end (.) because (.) he kind (.) of involves himself in it to begin with
 66.R. yeah
 67.V. and then () Ernest neglects his wife
 68.R. (2) erm
 69.V. quite hard to ()
 70.R. () depends on
 71. (completely indistinct) (possibly three)
 73.V. I suppose there's an issue about
 74. whether he neglects her emotionally but he does provide for her
 75.R. mmm (.)
 76. yeah
 77.V. (1) Rosalind makes no effort to share the responsibilities of
 78. marriage
 79.R. (1) erm (3) not really sure about that one
 80.V. not sure
 81.R. (I don't really read it as a (.) story about the responsibilities of
 82. marriage (.) I read it as) ()
 83.V. yeah (.) yeah (.) Ernest loses interest in the
 84. imaginary world he helped to create
 85.R. (2) erm (.) yeah (six)
 86.V. six (.) ok (.) the story describes the insensitivity of a husband to the
 87. emotional world of his wife
 88.R. (.) erm (1) yeah yeah
 89.V. (1) right this is a more (.) general question (.) the story shows the
 90. insensitivity of men (.) to the emotional needs of women
 91.R. erm
 92.V. that's
 93. a general one
 94.R. yeah
 (R - response indistinct)
 95.V. ok (1) the story describes the inability of a wife to
 96. cope with the realities of married life
 97.R. (3) erm (2) two
 98.V. (1) and the story describes the unwillingness of a wife (.) to cope with
 99. the realities of married life (.) slightly different
 100. yeah (3) erm (.) put that
 101. ()
 102.V. (six) (1) the story (.) des describes the inability of women in general
 103. (.) to cope with the realities of life
 104.R. mm
 105.V. more general (.) (no) (1) the story
 106. shows the inability of men in general to attend to the emotional needs
 107. of women

- 108.R. (4) () four
- 109.V. (1) ok (.) they (.) they're difficult those because(.)
110. I'm putting words in your mouth (laughs)
- 111.R. (laughs)
- 112.V. (1) did reading those
113. different interpretations make you feel any differently about the story
114. (.) did (.) it make you change your (.) the character that (.) you'd got
115. sympathy for for example(1) erm (1) no not really
- 116.V. ok (1) how would you
117. describe Rosalind if you had to describe her I know it's a while since
118. you read it in depth
- 119.R. mmm
- 120.V. what are the qualities that struck you about
121. her
- 122.R. I didn't like her that much (.) but erm (1) I suppose she was very
123. imaginative and (2) () she was imaginative and she (.) took it to
124. extremes (.) she didn't like the reality ()
- 125.R. mm (2)
- 126.V. there's not as much in the story about
127. him but (1) what was your impression
- 128.R. (2) mm (he was a bit boring really
129. ()
- 130.V. are there any comments that you'd have like to make about the
131. story that you weren't given space to on the questionnaire (1) was
132. that you thought you'd have liked to have said about it
- (I don't think you can generalise from it and) ()
- 133.V. mmm (1) what about the questionnaire did you find that quite difficult
134. to do
- 135.R. mmm no
136. it was alright (.) ok ...

(discussion of aims of research)

Participant Cf - Questionnaire Responses

Q. 1. In a few sentences try to explain what you think the story is about.

1. A. The female character, 'caught' in necessary marriage, resorts to day-dream type
2. of existence with her husband to avoid the reality of her situation.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

3. A. Quite a lot

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

4. A. Made me think.

Q. 3. With which character do you sympathise most?

5. A. Rosalind

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

6. A. Portrays female situation and lack of her power within the set social structure of
7. the time.

Q. 4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

8. A. neither.

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

9. A. the male character's background gives information about his socialisation and
10. thereby shows that he initially (?subliminally) may have understood his wife's
11. position.

Q.5 In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

12. A. no communication in the 'real world'.

Participant Cf - interview

- 1.V. (question about marital status)
 2.R. no I'm no longer married
 3.V. right it's only erm (.) it was something that
 4. should have been put on the questionnaire and I didn't (.) forgot to put it
 5. on so it's only general information (1) when you read the story was there
 6. anything in it which reminded you either of your own experience or
 7. something that you'd read about (1) or somebody else's experience (.)
 8. was there anything that (.) particularly (.) struck a chord
 9.R. I think the situation as far as marriage is concerned yes it did (.) yes
 10. the the trapped and (.) life change (1) without (.) really (.) anticipating
 11. the difference it would make
 12.V. uh huh (.) yeah (.) were there any particular
 13. sort of (.) sections in the story (.) that you can remember (1) that
 14. particularly (.) I mean there was nothing in the text that you could sort
 15. of say well this was (.) particularly relevant (.) significant (.) it's
 16. probably difficult now
 17.R. yes I think I would have preferred to re-read it
- (tape recorder switched off - Participant left alone for a few minutes to read story)
 you have
- 18.V. right (.) was there anything (.) then that (.) sort of reminded you
 19. of anything in your own experience
 20.R. just erm (.) trapped (.) and as
 21. I say the changes that that take place (.) perceptions that you have
 22. (.) erm (.) of marriage (.) before (.) are totally different (.) to the
 23. actuality
 24.V. right (.) yeah so it's the general story rather than specific
 25. (.) places in the text
 26.R. (.) yeah
 27.V. yeah (.) ok (.) what were your feelings at
 28. the end of the story what did you think happened next (.) to the
 29. characters
 30.R. after the end of the story (.) well I think she was just (.)
 31. caught and subdued and (.) erm (.) had no (1) thought of erm (.) a life
 32. for her own herself (.) and he was no longer willing to (.) help her (1)
 33. survive (.) the situation by (.) going into escapism
 34.V. uh huh
 35.V. how (.) true to life did you think it was (.) how realistic
 36.R. (1) well from my
 37. own experience I (.) I don't think (.) that erm (1) there is that amount
 38. of erm (2) inventiveness (.) within a relationship (1) to take it on to a
 39. false (1) realm
 40.V. uh huh
 41.R. to make (1) life bearable (.) and I I don't think
 42. (.) that (1) the erm (.) Ernest (.) in the story (.) would have had ac (.)
 43. any insight into why he was (.) placating and and and playing this
 44. game (.) to make her life (.) bearable he was do (.) my perception is
 45. that he was doing it for his own benefit because it amused him at the
 46. time (.) but that for (.) his wife (.) it was a case of (.) this was the only
 47. way she could survive the situation
 48.V. uh huh (.) right ok (.) right what
 49. I've (.) oh I bet I haven't brought them with me (.) what I normally do

50. now is bring a list of interpretations and ask you to agree with them
 51.R. right
 52.V. although I've a feeling I haven't got any (laughs) oh here we are (.)
 53. right (.) what we'll do is we'll (.) we'll (.) kind of (.) improvise because
 54. (.) I haven't brought a clean sheet (2) so if I (.) it's a seven point scale
 55. this is someone else's I don't want you to see it because I don't want you
 56. to be influenced (.) it goes from one which is totally (.) disagree
 57.R. right
 58. to seven which is totally agree (.) and in the middle you've got (.) kind
 59. of (.) I'll I'll do it
 60.R. can I can I hold it over
 61.V. well what I'll do I'll write it
 62. down
 63.R. well if I just hold this over the marks I I promise not to look at
 64. them
 65.V. well I don't suppose it really matters because it's your own (.) it's
 66. your interpretation really that (.) that counts (.) I mean (.) this is (.)
 67. people (.) can agree with it or disagree
 68.R. mmm
 69.V. but I mean it's your it's
 70. your (.) it's what you feel that
 71.R. alright
 72.V. ok so Rosalind becomes obsessed
 73. with her imaginary world (.) one is totally disagree (.) seven is totally
 74. agree
 75.R. right
 76.V. and then you've got a range (.) er sort of indicating the
 77. amount of certainty you have
 78.R. right
 79.V. with that statement (1) I'll write this
 80. down (.)
 81.R. I would say six
 82.V. (.) six (1) ok (.) Rosalind neglects her husband (.)
 83. again it's (.) totally disagree and (.) totally agree
 84.R. I would say two
 85.V. two
 86. (2) don't need that actually Ernest fails to participate in the imaginary
 87. world
 88.R. (2) erm (2) well I would disagree with that (.) he does participate
 89.V. uh huh (.) (3) so (.) not totally then (.) disagree
 90.R. (1) but it changes
 91. though (.) at the very end doesn't it I mean
 92.V. that's right
 93.R. as that says because he
 94. he does participate (1) erm (1) now I would say (.) I would say erm
 95. a two or a three (.) there (.)
 96.V. right
 97.R. because he (.) he does participate (.)
 98. but it (.) it's not specifically (.) erm (.) why or (1) no (.) I would (.) I
 99. would disagree with that because he does participate
 100.V. right so is that
 101. (.) totally or
 102.R. yeah yes (.) yes
 103.V. ok (1) Ernest neglects his wife
 104.R. I would say

105. yes (.) you know (.) erm
 106.V. totally
 107.R. that would be my perception of it (.) I would
 108. say (.) er six
 109.V. six (.) ok (2)
 110.R. it's to his own benefit that he (.)
 111.V. right (.) so you
 112. think that he doesn't think it's neglecting his wife
 113.R. my (.) my perception is
 114. that he erm (2) he does neglect her because he participates in her
 115. imaginary world to suit his own ends not to suit hers
 116.V. right ok (1)
 117. Rosalind makes no effort to share the responsibilities of marriage
 118.R. (2) mm
 119. (2) no I would (.) I would say that she does(.) because she tries to
 120. conform to the stereotypical (1) erm (.) requirements of (.) of that kind
 121. of marriage
 122.V. mmm
 123.R. so she does to (.) but no I would say erm (.) two
 124.V. two (.)
 125.R. mm
 126.V. ok (1) Ernest loses interest in the imaginary world he helped to
 127. create
 128.R. yes I'd agree with that
 129.V. right is that totally (.) totally
 130.R. erm (.) yes (.)
 131. think so
 132.V. the story describes the insensitivity of a husband (.) to the
 133. emotional world of his wife
 134.R. (3) six
 135.V. (2) the story shows the insensitivity of
 136. men to the emotional needs of women
 137.R. yes six
 138.V. (2) just a few (.) the story
 139. describes the inability of a wife to cope with the realities of married life
 140.R. (2) er (2) six
 141.V. (.) the story describes the unwillingness of a wife to cope
 142. with the realities of married life so it's slightly different
 143.R. yes (.) yes I see
 144. (.) erm (1) no I would say two
 145.V. two (1) the story describes the inability of
 146. women in general (.) to cope with the realities of life
 147.R. oh (.) no (.) (laughs)
 148.V. (laughs)
 149. no I'd give that a four (laughs)
 150.V. four (laughs) right (1) it's difficult to
 151. generalise
 152.R. yes
 153.V. the story shows the inability of men in general (.) to
 154. attend to the emotional needs of women
 155.R. I'd give that a four as well
 156.V. right (.)
 157. ok (.) that's great (.) thankyou (1) having read those different
 158. interpretations does that have any effect on your own (.) does it change
 159. (.) the way you feel about the story

160. R. no no
161. V. not at all (.) ok (1) why is it do you
162. think that (.) you just go along with what you originally said about the
163. story
164. R. because when (.) when erm (.) I suppose it was like deep and
165. surface reading (.) when I knew that you were going to (.) require (.)
166. a questionnaire
167. V. uh huh
168. R. to be completed (.) I actually made sure (.) I
169. read it first (.) and then (.) erm (.) I scanned (.) the questions
170. V. mm
171. R. and
172. then I went back and re-read it (.) erm (.) but I was aware of of (.)
173. whilst I was reading it (.) that erm (.) there was a (.) there was a
174. secondary layer (.) that erm (.) I needed to really get to before I (1)
175. V. mmm
176. R. missed the point completely
177. V. right
178. R. and so erm (.) I just felt that that was
179. (1) though through I think it was a very well craf (1) I should be so
180. good to Virginia Woolf
181. V. (laughs)
182. R. but I really felt it was an extremely well
183. crafted story
184. V. mm
185. R. and that it could quite easily (.) erm (.) you could
186. quite easily gloss over
187. V. mm
188. R. erm (.) some of the the (1) parallels
189. V. right (.) ok
190. R. has that answered your question
191. V. erm (.) yeah (.) I mean you were
192. obviously aware of the different interpretations but you still (.) went
193. with (.) the character that you felt sympathy for
194. R. I just (.) yeah (.) I just felt that erm (.) (.)
195. because I didn't actually read until after (.)
196. V. mm
197. R. I'd (.) given my
198. interpretation of it that it was (.) Virginia Woolf
199. V. mm
200. R. so erm (.) when I
201. did (.) realise that it was Woolf (.) who'd written it
202. V. mm
203. R. I actually went
203. back and had another look at it just to
204. V. mm
205. R. and I felt that erm (.) yeah
206. I felt that I was ok with my interpretation of it
207. V. mm (.) right
208. R. and I hadn't
209. sort of lost out on the artistic features
210. V. (laughs) no that's why you weren't
211. told it was Woolf until the end
211. R. right
212. V. because it was felt that knowing that

213. might (.) influence the way you read the story
 214.R. it certainly would yes
 215.V. erm
 216.R. I'm
 217. glad it wasn't the yellow wallpaper
 218.V. oh right yeah that that's one story I
 219. actually considered using (1) you don't like that story
 220.R. well we had it the
 221. first (.) part of the (.) first term
 222.V. it's similar because you've got the
 223. woman's perspective
 224.R. that's right
 225.V. and you (.) but you can see the
 226. husband's (.) point of view
 227.R. mm
 228.V. yeah (.) how would you describe
 229. Rosalind if you had to describe her (1) I mean if it would help you
 230. I've got some things that I've gleaned from the text
 231.R. I think she was a
 232. victim (.) of circumstance (.) with being an orphan (.) and erm bitter
 233. (.) about her (.) situation (.) and marriage was the only way that she
 234. could survive basically
 235.V. uh huh
 236.R. erm (.) and probably (.) weighed down
 237. with all this (.) erm (.) she was probably timid (.) like a rabbit
 238.V. mm
 239.R. and (.)
 240. that's why she related to her own pet rabbit (.) which isn't actually
 241. mentioned anywhere (.) else is it
 242.V. right no (.) it's just at the beginning
 243. (.) very briefly
 244.R. so she probably had to give up this pet rabbit when she
 245. got married that's my (.) assumption
 246.V. mm
 247.R. anyway (.) can I have a look at
 248. (.) things that you said
 249.V. they're very (.) kind of erm (.) turn that over
 250. because that's er that's Ernest (.) they're just (.) lifted from the text and
 251. if there's anything that you would add (.) that isn't in there (.) how you
 252. perceived Rosalind really
 253.R. right (.) yeah (1) I wouldn't agree that she was
 254. very much in love with her husband
 255.V. right
 256.R. I think she probably responded
 257. to the fact that he (.) played along with her games so she felt secure (.) and
 258. happy in that security because he did (.) participate in this imaginary (.)
 259. world (.) which was the only way that they were acceptable to each other
 260.V. right (.) and what about Ernest how would you describe Ernest
 261.R. well (.)
 262. obviously (.) with (.) having erm (.) a shower of rice from (.) Etonites (.)
 263. erm (.) you know (.) public school (.) upper middle class background (.)
 264.V. mm
 265.R. erm (.) she was probably very (.) erm (.) fortunate that that he did
 266. participate in her game initially
 267.V. mm

- 268.R. and erm (1) so perhaps maybe not (.)
 269. not erm (.) just unthinking
 270.V. yeah
 271.R. not necessarily erm (2) thoughtful in his
 272. participation with her (.) life (.) just accepting (.) I mean (.) there's
 273. nothing in the story to say why they were attracted to each other or how
 274. they met
 275.V. mm
 276.R. so erm (.) we don't really know (.) any depth to him (.)
 277. really (.) it's just the I (.) I would say that the story is basically just a (.)
 278. description of the effect of er the married state upon (.) Rosalind
 279.V. right
 280.V. what I've added to the description is that he was very much in love with
 281. Rosalind would you agree with that
 282.R. I don't think so (.) no (.) I think that
 283. he was probably very much in love with the (.) situation that they were
 284. (.) at one specific moment in time
 285.V. mm
 286.R. and because it flattered his ego (.)
 287. to be (.) the king (.) of the rabbits (.) and (.) the maker of laws (.) that erm
 288. (.) he refle (.) he (.) basked in the reflected glory from (.) from that
 289. description from Rosalind (.) does that sound really (.) really cruel
 290.V. no I
 291. (.) think you're quite right
 292.R. I think yes (.) cos you it says here he felt very
 293. much in love with her
 294.V. mm
 295.R. so I actually erm (3) yes he (.) she she gives
 296. erm (.) a description (2) of erm (1) this rabbit (.) the hare (.) that he (.)
 297. that Lappin (.) chased
 298.V. mm
 299.R. a white hare (.) small hare (.) silver grey with
 300. big bright eyes (.) and he (.) acknowledges that and said yes a smallish
 301. animal (.) with eyes popping out of her head and two little front paws
 302. dangling (.) it was exactly how she sat with her sewing dangling in her
 303. hands (.) yes I think it was just (.) erm (.) because he was actually playing
 304. this game really well
 305.V. mm
 306.R. it was as if he was (.) just happy with the fact
 307. that he was able to (1) maybe manipulate's too strong a word (.) but (1)
 308. he was (.) actually controlling her (.) by (.) giving her something to erm (.)
 309. hold on to so that she could (.) make sense of or cope with the situation
 310. that she was in by being married to him (.) does that
 311.V. yeah well there was
 312. the bit that you read out (.) you (.) you would say that that was told from
 313. Ernest's (.) sort of (.) viewpoint then (.) that's him looking at Rosalind
 314.R. mm
 315.V. yeah
 316.R. it says here (.) is that what she's called (.) the real Rosalind (.) and and
 317. so he actually erm loved the projection (.) rather than the actual (.)
 318. Rosalind
 319.V. right (.) ok (.) so you think he was also doing the same to
 320. Rosalind as she was doing to him he was kind of projecting this image on
 321. to her
 322.R. yes (.) yes

323.V. it wasn't necessarily (.) the real Rosalind
 324.R. no (.) no
 325. (.) and maybe again (.) that's the way he coped with (.) erm (.) a wife that
 326. he didn't expect (.) to have (.) erm (.) and (.) who probably didn't
 327. measure up and was inadequate (.) to what he needed in that society at
 328. that moment in time to fit in with what his (.) perception of himself was
 328.V. mm (.) it's interesting (1) were there any other qualities that you'd like to
 329. add to either of the characters (.)
 330.R. did I like any of the qualities of the
 331. characters
 332.V. did you like any of them I mean that wasn't the question but
 333. did you
 334.R. oh
 335.V I mean I think you you've answered that (.) kind of on the
 336. questionnaire by saying which character you felt sympathy for (.) but I
 337. get the impression that you didn't particularly like Ernest (.) was there
 338. anything (.) redeeming about him
 339.R. (1) no (.) no (.) I I had to actually look
 340. at (.) look at the way I (.) assessed him (.) and erm (.) I mean I think he's
 341. also a victim of circumstance when it comes down to (.) social standing
 342. and conditioning and socialisation and all those things (.) but I think at
 343. the very end (.) erm (.) he actually doesn't redeem himself at all because
 344. of the fact that he said (.) at the end (.) yes (.) poor Lapinova (.) caught in
 345. a trap (.) killed
 346.V. mm
 347.R. and he was just aware of the fact that (.) he was no longer
 348. willing to play this game (.) to make life bearable (.) for her (.) and
 350. therefore (.) he was bowing out of that completely (.) and by saying (.)
 351. caught in a trap (.) that's the marriage (.) and killed (.) she was just going
 352. to be totally subdued and ignored and forgotten (.) from then on
 353.V. mm (1) ok (.) where there any comments about the story (.) that you
 354. would have liked to have made on the questionnaire and weren't given
 355. the chance (.) I mean you were asked (.) fairly (.) specific questions (.)
 356. something you'd have liked to have been asked
 357.R. I can't really remember
 358. the questionnaire
 359.V. would you like to have a look (.) this is yours
 360.R. oh is it oh
 361. (laughs)
 362.V. (laughs) don't worry
 364.R. (4) oh did I write that (.) gosh that's good
 365.V. (laughs) everybody's had the same reaction
 366.R. (8) no (.) I can't say that
 367. there's anything I could have (.) I found it (.) quite difficult (.) erm (.)
 368. interesting (.) and erm (.) worthwhile (.) to go back (.) and underline the
 369.R. well it was
 370.V. mm
 371.R. but then I think that if
 372. you're going to agree to do something like this you've got to (.) really go
 373. into it haven't you
 374.V. yeah
 375.R. no I found that really good actually
 376.V. mm
 377.R. yeah
 378.V. it's sometimes quite difficult to (.) pick out specific points in the text

388. that actually make you feel that way
 389.R. yes
 380.V. sometimes it's just a general
 381. feeling
 382.R. yeah (.) yeah (.) well I don't think there's anything there that I
 383. would have erm (1)
 384.V. no (.) right (.) were there any problems with the
 385. questionnaire itself (.) you didn't have any problems actually answering
 386. the questions
 387.R. no (.) no (.) I was just (.) quite amazed at the (.) the depth
 388. (.) that I felt I got out of the story as I say I went back and re-read it and
 389. then (.) erm (.) and then I thought no I wasn't going to worry about the
 390. questionnaire because of the way they're structured
 391.V. mm
 392.R. it would be best
 393. to just answer and then just (.) be damned (laughs)
 394.V. mm (laughs) yeah
 395.R. because
 396. sometimes you can just (.) contradict yourself (.) can't you
 397.V. it's for (.) such
 398. a short story it's very (.) there's lots of things you can get out of it
 399.R. very
 400. much so yes
 401.V. I was surprised I actually went (.) to do an analysis of it and
 402. (.) it's still ongoing
 403.R. yes (.) mind you I've found that when (.) I did erm
 404. (.) Silas Marner...

(general discussion - then discussion of aims of research etc)

- 405.V. ...did you say you liked the story
 406.R. well (.) I thought it was very thought
 407. provoking
 408.V. mm
 409.R. but it's not something that you could just sit down and let
 410. it just waft over you
 411.V. mm
 412.R. it's (.) I think it really strikes (.) for some people
 413. it would really strike chords
 414.V. yeah I I mean that relates to the theory
 415. really...
 (discussion of theory)

- 416.R. ...I think there may also be a difference in in generations in perceptions of
 417. marriage too
 418.V. mm you're right
 419.R. you know because I mean I was first
 420. married in 1970 so it was you know
 421.V. mm
 422.R. that was just the first time
 423. (laughs) so I mean you know my experience is then (.) erm (.) a little
 424. different
 425.V. mm (.) I think you're right because erm (.) certainly (.) younger
 426. people tend to (.) erm I'm talking about the sort of 16-25 age group that I
 427. had on there (.) seem to see this (.) thing of equality as being the norm (.)
 428.R. right

- 429.V. which it obviously wasn't in those days
 430.R. right (.) well it wasn't when
 431. I (.) I mean I (.) I then married in 1980 (.) and (1) you know at the age of
 432. thirty and I'd been working and (.) erm (.) and owned my own car and
 433. everything (.) and I I got married (.) and erm (.) I had to get my
 434. husband's permission to open a bank account
 435.V. hmm (.) yeah (.) you're
 436. right yeah (.) this is the kind of thing that (.) the younger people seem to
 437. take for granted
 438.R. mm mm
 439.V. that er they don't realise that (.) I mean I think
 440. a lot of the feeling that comes through the story is like (.) irritation with
 441. Rosalind (.) why doesn't she do something (.) which you have to
 442. understand that she couldn't
 443.R. that's right
 444.V. (.) erm
 445.R. well it's the powerlessness
 446. that erm (.) I think girls (.) girls (.) I don't mean that patronisingly
 447.V. mm
 448.R. but (.) but but (.) young girls and women (.) young women (.) erm
 449. nowadays know that there is the choice but that
 450.V. uh huh
 451.R. that comes down
 452. to all sorts of things doesn't it it comes down to supp ben (.)
 453. supplementary benefit and income support
 454.V. mm mm
 455.R. and also (.) erm (.)
 456. protection (.) from (1) having (.) erm (.) sexual discrimination and all
 457. those sorts of changes that have (.) that have taken place
 458.V. that's right
 459.R. in the last ten
 460. years
 461.V. well even the choice to be married I mean
 462.R. that's right
 463.V. I have the feeling
 464. that she hadn't any choice (.) she was an orphan
 465.R. that's right (.) yeah
 466.V. and we're not (.) told what (.) class she's from (.) but (.) there is that (.) I I
 467. got the feeling that possibly she (.) well (.) whatever class she was from I
 468. don't know she couldn't go out and work I I had the feeling she had to
 469. marry
 470.R. mm mm
 471.V. I don't know what you felt but it's quite a sad story
 472. (laughs)
 473. well (.) well I thought that (.) that (.) she was bit like a
 474. governess
 475.V. mm
 476.R. and equates with that sort of like genteel (.)
 477.V. mm
 478.R. poor
 479. (.) lower middle class
 480.V. mm (.) didn't quite fit in
 481.R. mm mm (.) especially
 482. when she (.) and (.) and (.) sensitive (1) but didn't fit in (.) because of the
 483. present that she gave her mother in law (.) thought that was really quite

484.V. that's right (.) yeah
 485. think we've all had that feeling of being not quite
 486.R. yes
 487.V. not quite in the
 488. right circle somehow (laughs) yeah (1) it's interesting that you picked up
 489. on the erm (.) the age (.) kind of thing (.) erm (.) I think that's another
 490. problem with the story (.) when I'm asking people does it relate to their
 491. own lives or is there anything in their own experience I think because it's
 492. quite dated (.) that is a problem
 493.R. mm
 494.V. and maybe
 495.R. I'm dated (laughs)
 496.V. (.) (laughs) but I think maybe that's why a lot of people erm (.) sympathise
 497. with Ernest (.) there's all those things coming in about women have got
 498. equality now and this has no relation to my life and poor Ernest (.) so I
 499. think that's (.) a factor
 500.R. mm (1) but I think there's a lot of things that erm
 501. (1) they have to be read in context to the (.) to the time that they were
 502. written
 503.V. mm
 504.R. and I think that's something that erm (.) it's it's very difficult
 505. (.) to keep on (.) top of (.) history
 506.V. mm mm
 507.R. and to remember (.) the context of
 508. history within the writer's life
 509.V. uh huh
 510.R. and I think for someone (.) of
 511. Virginia Woolf's stan (.) standing (.) to actually be able to portray that
 512. when she was (.) erm (.) she was upper middle class
 513.V. mm
 514.R. erm (.) and to
 515. see it from (.) a lower middle class (.) woman's (.) point of view
 516.V. mm mm
 517.R. I thought that was a very perceptive piece (.) really
 518.V. uh huh (.) yeah
 519.R. erm (.) but
 520. then (.) she had the same thing with the sexual abuse that she suffered as
 521. a child herself
 522.V. that's right yeah (1) yeah I think I mean that's one reason why people
 523. weren't told it was by Woolf initially I mean I could (.) there was no way I
 524. could stop people from looking at the back and (.) finding out if that was
 525. the case but (.) erm (.) knowing her background I think would influence
 526. the way you read the story
 527.R. yeah
 528.V. and (.) it (.) in a way it makes it more
 529. depressing I think because (.) you relate it to her life as well
 530.R. mm
 531.V. kind of I
 532. don't know
 533.R. well I felt that erm (.) by reading (.) Eliot's (.) life (.) erm
 534. (.) when I was doing Silas Marner (.) it actually (.) brought Silas Marner
 535. into such a erm (.) a better context into a much better context not such a
 536. (.) and erm (.) I'd have loved to have done a critique of (.) the two books
 537. alongside each other
 538.V. mm

- 539.R. it would have been really good (.) yeah it was
 540. interesting
 541.V. do you think knowing something about Woolf (.) well I
 542. think(.) you've already said this (.) actually helped you to read it (.) on a
 543. different level
 544.R. no I I felt that it would've m (.) it erm (.) it prompted me
 545. to look at it again (.) to make sure that I had (1) erm (.) given it (.) a deep
 546. enough assessment because it was Woolf
 547.V. mm
 548.R. erm (.) I don't think (.) I
 549. mean if it had been written by Joan Smith
 550.V. mm mm
 551.R. five years ago I
 552. probably would have just scanned it and thought yes (.) ok (.) that is how
 553. I felt about it (.) but (.) because I saw that it was Woolf after I'd read it
 554. (.) I went back and and (.) looked at it and thought well there must be
 555. something deeper here
 556.V. mm
 557.R. and then I thought no (.) I have actually
 558. given it the (.) you know (.) what I (.) got out of it I got out of it from the
 559. first reading and not (.) because I'd seen her name
 560.V. right yeah (.) again
 561. knowing that it was Woolf (.) kind of (.) prejudices people to think that I
 562. should sympathise with the female character because
 563.R. right yes

(discussion of role of literary training)

- 564.R. ...it's the content you have to go on (.) I got as much out of it (.) reading it
 565. (.) thinking that it might have been Joan Smith (.) than if it had been
 566. Virginia Woolf (.) so I mean it was the story rather than (.) the author
 567.V. mm (.) did you think it was a difficult story or (.) you had no problems
 568. with it
 569.R. no I don't think I did have any problems with it (.) but I had
 570. to (1) just (.) mentally check that I hadn't just glossed over things and I
 571. (.) as I say I did actually go back and (.) and look into it a bit deeper (.) no
 572. I don't think I had any problems with the story
 573.V. is there anything you
 574. want to ask me
 575.R. no (laughs)
 576.V. (laughs) oh I must have explained that very well
 577. (laughs)
 578.R. (laughs)

(general discussion)

Participant Ef – Questionnaire Responses

Q.1 In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

A. 1. The relationship between a married couple and themselves and keeping the
2. fantasy in a marriage.

3. Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

4. A. quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

5. A. I suppose I relate to her in a peculiar way!

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

6. A. neither (later changes her mind to Rosalind)

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

7. A. The author tells the story from the eyes of Rosalind, but I don't feel that the

8. author particularly sympathises.

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

A. 9. Perhaps Ernest has so little character, Rosalind had to invent him one. No
10. communication. Perhaps Rosalind lives too much in fantasy land and doesn't enjoy
11. every day life and find the beauty in living. She also seemed frightened of losing her
12. special part of their marriage.

Participant Ef - interview

(Question about marital status)

- 1.R. I was going to say it can have a lot of relevance
- 2.V. that's right yeah (.) so I
3. mean you don't have to answer but I was just asking people whether
4. they were married or not that's all
- 5.R. well I I am married (.) er but I have been
6. divorced and I think (.) in some ways that (.) could have something to
7. do with the piece
- 8.V. you're right yeah yeah (.) right (.) erm (.) ok so you've
9. obviously re-read the story again
- 10.R. mmm
- 11.V. was there anything in it that
12. reminded you you either of your own experience or somebody else's
13. or something you've read about was there anything sort of (.) struck
14. any chords with you
- 15.R. well I suppose perhaps the fact that in my (.)
16. previous marriage (.) there's this erm (1) little world of your own
- 17.V. uh huh
- 18.R.
19. and (.) although it wasn't to to the extreme of the the rabbits (.) that
20. there is something that er (.) perhaps er er a joke that you have (.)
21. between you that nobody else is erm (.) has (.) knowledge of
- 22.V. m
- 23.R. in that way I
24. think there is (.) but erm this (.) to me is is very sad (1) and er I feel (.)
25. sorry for her (.) and I don't know whether this is an arranged marriage
26. (.) and (.) because (.) she's (.) feels very unfamiliar with his name (.) so
27. er I'm presuming from that it's some sort of arranged marriage or (.)
28. very (.) short term
- 29.V. yeah
- 30.R. courting (.) and er (.) she's trying to find some way
31. (.) to switch on (.) with him
32. yeah
- 33.R. she does find him attractive
- 34.V. uh huh
- 35.R. but
36. erm (1) she's trying to find some way of of (1) plugging in
- 37.V. right yeah
- 38.R. and I
39. I find that (.) that quite sad because she's so worried about losing that
40. (.) and that means it's so important to her (1) and
- 41.V. yeah
- 42.R. and throughout
43. the erm (.) the story (.) she's she's (.) very concerned about it (.) so she
44. feels (.) like (?) (1) very much out of his world
- 45.V. yeah (1) right
- (slight pause while tape recorder is checked)
- 46.V. erm (.) what were your feelings at the end of the story what did you
47. think happened next
- 48.R. erm (2) it was very blunt (.) the end of the story
49. (1) erm I wasn't (.) particularly happy with the ending I suppose
50. because I'd enjoyed it

- 51.V. mmm
- 52.R. that I wasn't happy with the ending (.)
- 53.V. yeah
- 53.R. erm (2) that they'd lost communication (1) and (1) she'd lost (.) the
54. magic in the marriage (.) she wanted to keep that this was (.) the
55. magic world and (.) and she he'd (.) more or less said you know (.)
56. like grow up
- 57.V. yeah (1) erm (.) how true to life (.) did you think it was (.)
58. how realistic
- 59.R. mmm (1) I suppose it must happen (.) that when I say (.)
60. that (.) I mean I I don't particularly relate (.) to the story at all (.)
61. not in even my previous marriage (.) but erm (.) there was an element
62. of (.) of this (.) little magical world
- 63.V. uh huh
- 64.R. but er I suppose it it must it
65. must happen
- 66.V. yeah
- 67.R. probably more often than er (.) we care to imagine
68. really (laughs)
- 69.V. yeah (laughs)
- 70.R. but perhaps I I don't know (.) I don't know
- 71.V. did you mark anything in the text or was there anything that you
72. particularly marked that was significant (.) for you
- 73.R. erm (1) there was
74. some (.) markings (.) just more (.) not actually (.) er relevant to the
75. questions (.) that you'd asked me
- 76.V. yeah
- 77.R. erm
- (indistinct as Participant looks through text)
- 78.R. I've (.) marked the fact that she was an only child
- 79.V. yeah
- 80.R. erm (.) I suppose
81. something that erm(.) did (.) hit home when I read that was that (.)
82. not actually my own experience I am one of six children
- 83.V. uh huh
- 84.R. family (.)
85. used to (.) large family lots of Aunts and Uncles (.) and in (.) my
86. previous marriage I married into a large family (.) there
- 87.V. uh huh
- 88.R. but er
89. my (.) new (.) sister-in-law (1) erm (.) was an only child (.) and she
90. came into this large family and I (.) and I re (.) I could see her (.)
- 91.V. yeah
- 92.R. in this situation (.) and she was very lost
- 93.V. yeah
- 94.R. and really didn't know
95. how to cope because they were a very close family (.) and they all used
96. to get together on Sunday (.) and the (.) front room was packed with
97. everybody
- 98.V. oh
- 99.R. and (.) and she just didn't feel part of it at all and hated
100. every minute of it
- 101.V. mmm so very similar (.)
- 102.R. mmm
- 103.V. similar situations

104.R. mmm
 105.V. mmm
 106. that's interesting (1) right (.) the next bit I've (.) what I've got is some
 107. (.) interpretations that have been (.) applied to the story and that (2)
 108. I'm just going to ask you (1) if there are any that you would agree with
 109. (1) and how much you would agree with them
 110.R. mmm
 111.V. right (3) so what
 112. I'm going to ask you to do it's a seven point scale
 113.R. oh right
 114.V. and you kind
 115. of (.) so you either totally agree with the statement or you (.) er (.)
 116. disagree with the statement or you totally agree with it
 117.R. mmm
 118.V. so the first
 119. one is Rosalind becomes obsessed with her imaginary world
 120.R. yes
 121.V. you
 122. totally agree with that
 123.R. mmm
 124.V. ok (.) Rosalind neglects her husband
 125.R. ah (.)
 126. people spoke about that and I didn't think so
 127.V. right
 128.R. er so (1) I did give
 129. that some thought (1)
 130.V. uh huh
 131.R. erm (.) not sure
 132.V. not sure
 133.R. mmm
 134.V. ok (.)
 135. right (.) Ernest fails to participate in the imaginary world
 136.R. er (2) no I
 137. disagree with that totally because he did take part
 138.V. right
 139.R. at the
 140. beginning
 141.V. ok
 142.R. so (.) a two yeah
 143.V. two yeah (.) Ernest neglects his wife
 144.R. yeah
 145.V. totally (.) totally agree yeah
 146.R. agree yeah
 147.V. Rosalind makes no effort to share the
 148. responsibilities of marriage
 149.R. I don't think she understands how to
 150. (.) take responsibility I don't think it was (.) actually lack of effort
 151.V. right
 152.R. and so (1) I would say two
 153.V. t two (1) Ernest loses interest in the
 154. imaginary world that he helped to create
 155.R. yeah (.) totally agree
 156.V. the story describes the insensitivity of a husband (.) to the emotional
 157. world of his wife
 158.R. totally agree (laughs)

- 159.V. (laughs) ok the story shows the
 160. insensitivity of men (.) to the emotional needs of women that's kind of
 161. a more general
 162.R. totally agree (laughs)
 163.V. (laughs) right (1) the story describes the inability
 164. of a wife (.) to cope with the realities of married life (.) that's a more
 165. general one
 166.R. mmm yeah yeah I I think I'd six
 167.V. six (.) ok (.) the story
 168. describes the unwillingness of a wife to cope with the realities of
 169. married life that's a bit different
 170.R. mmm (.) totally disagree
 171.V. right (1) the story describes the
 172. inability of women in general to cope with the realities of life
 173. totally
 174.R. disagree
 175.V. (laughs) and the story shows the inability of men in general
 176. (.) to attend to the emotional needs of women
 177.R. totally agree oh oh of of
 178. men in general
 179.V. general yeah
 180.R. oh no cos I I've got the most (.) wonderful
 181. husband
 182.V. right
 183.R. that's (.) very sensitive so (.)
 184.V. totally disagree
 185.R. I yeah
 186.V. ok
 187.R. some men but not (.) not many men
 188.V. yeah not generally (.) right (.) ok (3)
 189. did reading those different interpretations make you feel differently
 190. about the story in any way
 191.R. um yeah (.) yes I think so it does (.) bring
 192. up some points (.) erm (.) because I have (.) I feel it is written (1)
 193. from her point of view (.)
 194.V. right
 195.R. from her eyes (.) and it does bring up
 196. (.) erm (.) the other side of the (.) story and (.) poor Ernest
 197.V. ok (.) and
 198. erm did it make you change your own (.) original (.)
 199.R. no (.) no
 200.V. ok (1) why
 201. was that do you think
 202.R. I suppose because I do feel strongly (.) about
 203. erm (1) how she felt out of (.) his world (.) and this was (.) her way
 204. (.) of plugging in to it
 205.V. right
 206.R. and he didn't see that
 207.V. ok (.) how would
 208. you describe Rosalind if you had to describe her (.) I mean I've got
 209. a brief description which (.) (.) taken from the text
 210.R. well I'd say she
 211. was (.) sensitive (.) lonely (1) erm (2) got any other descriptive words
 212. there I could use (laughs 1)
 213.V. (laughs) yeah (.) what I sort of put was) (.)

214. Rosalind Thorburn is an imaginative young woman
 215.R. mmm
 216.V. the description
 217. that's in the text is small fair with big bright eyes
 218.R. oh right oh ()
 219.V. well it could be anything really (.) emotional or or
 220.R. () thinking of her as a
 221. a rabbit (.) is this (.) the idea
 222.V. er (.) I suppose so yeah er (.) these
 223. are just bits that have been lifted er (.) and (.) she's an orphan
 224.R. mmm
 225.V. erm (1) she welcomes the security of becoming part of Ernest's family
 226. (.) she's very much in love with her husband (1) now you might not
 227. agree with some of those things
 228.R. oh I think I think she is I I think she's
 229. in love (.) with (.) being married and and (.) having (.) a partner (.)
 230. and a family
 231.V. uh huh
 232.R. erm (.) but finds it very difficult (1) because he is
 233. from such a large (.) and very erm (1) powerful family as she sees it
 234. (1) I think it erm (.) I do like the story it really paints (.) a good
 235. picture
 236.V. mmm
 237.R. you really do get the feel of these (.) of his mother
 238. of her mother in law
 239.V. yeah yeah (1) what about Ernest (.) I mean
 240. the (.) description again (.) it's been lifted here I've put Ernest (.)
 241. is a spruce muscular young man
 242.R. mmm (.) well that's what it says
 243.V. yeah
 244. straight nose blue eyes and a very firm mouth (.) educated at
 245. Rugby he's now a civil servant (.) comes from a large and wealthy
 246. family who live in the ancestral home (.) he's a serious man who is
 247. however very much in love with his wife
 248.R. oh no I don't think he is
 249.V. (laughs)
 250.R. no I I agree with all the descriptive (.)
 251.V. uh huh
 252.R. views (.) but
 253. not (.) I don't agree that he's very much in love with his wife
 254.V. ok (2)
 255. erm (2) right are there any qualities to Ernest that you would have
 256. (.) liked to add ()
 257.R. see I see him more as a puny type of a man (laughs)
 258.V. (laughs)
 259. yeah
 260.R. (laughs 1) although it does say he's muscular
 261.V. yeah
 262.R. erm (.) that's
 263. why I think how much she's in love with him (.) I mean she sees all
 264. (.) his attributes (.) erm (2) but erm (3) well I suppose I see him as
 265. insensitive an and (.) a man's man
 266.V. uh huh
 267.R. and and perhaps not used to
 268. (.) females and (.) and dealing with their (.) their ways (laughs)

269.V. right
 270. (laughs) (.) were there any (.) sort of qualities that you'd like to have
 271. (.) added to the description of Rosalind (.) apart from what you've
 272. already given me
 273.R. mmm (.) erm (4) I suppose I see her as a bit of a
 274. lost soul
 275.V. right
 276.R. (1) no I don't think so
 277.V. ok (.) were there any comments
 278. that you'd have liked to have made about the story (.) on the
 279. questionnaire that you were given (.) originally (.) and you weren't
 280. given the space to
 281.R. oh I don't do you know I don't even remember
 282. the er (.) questionnaire (.)
 283.V. I think I've got some copies (.) I've got your
 284. original one (3) this was it (.) those are the sorts of questions that you
 285. were asked
 286.R. mmm
 287.V. I don't know if there's anything that you felt when
 288. you were reading through it that you thought oh (.) I wish they'd
 289. asked me this (.) or that
 290.R. oh right (4) see as I (.) put there I'm not
 291. actually used to reading fiction
 292.V. right
 293.R. it isn't some (.) it's (.) since (.) the
 294. course actually I keep saying I must (.) get (.) get into (.)
 295.V. yeah
 296.R. and now
 297. that I've got the time I don't have to be reading all the (.)
 298.V. yeah
 299.R. things
 300. for the course I I would I would like to read cos I I have enjoyed it
 301. it's usually (.) just the time
 302.V. yeah (.) well I think we all have that
 303. problem don't we (1) I very rarely read fiction for pleasure now
 304.R. mmm yeah
 305.V. it's a shame really because I mean that's what my interests are (.)
 306. except I never get a chance to read anything (laughs) but er (.) like
 307. you say it's getting the time (3)
 308.R. I thought I'd put I relate to her when I
 309. read the story I thought why did I write that why did I relate to her
 310.V. perhaps it was her situation that you (.) related to
 311.R. (1) erm (.) well I
 312. can't think of anything (4) see I even put that the (.) the author
 313. sympathised (.) with neither of them (1) which I don't really agree
 314. with now (laughs)
 315.V. who do you think (.) the author sympathises with
 316. then
 317.R. er Rosalind
 318.V. Rosalind
 319.R. mmm here (.) perhaps Ernest had so little
 320. character Rosalind had to invent him one (laughs 1) oh dear
 321.V. (laughs) well
 322. that goes well with you er (.) saying that she's very much in love with
 323. him and he's so puny (laughs 2)

- 324.R. (laughs 2) yeah (.) er (.) well I can't think of
 325. anything actually no
 326.V. what about the questionnaire itself did you find
 327. it quite difficult or (.) easy or (.) was there (.) anything (.) that you
 328. found particularly problematic
 329.R. er just that I would have liked to have
 330. been given more time and to read it again (.) like at home
 331.V. yeah yeah
 332.R. erm
 333. (.) just that that particular situation because it's not (.) it it wasn't
 334. like a (.) a class situation where you can sit and read it in peace while
 335.V. no
 336.R. everybody's reading it that everybody's talking and I don't read very
 337. well under those (.) circumstances
 338.V. so (.) you did it in the classroom did you
 339.R. mmm
 340.V. oh right I thought (.) oh (.) ok (.) the idea was that everybody
 341. would get them to take home (.) perhaps and bring them back (.)
 342. at some time I didn't realise that you'd actually
 343.R. mmm no (.) oh no (.) he handed
 344. them out (.) that night
 345.V. in a way that's kind of what I was trying to
 346. avoid because
 347.R. oh was it
 348.R. it wasn't (.) supposed to be seen as an
 349. assignment or a (.) sort of test it was (.) something that
 350.R. no it it was actually
 351. very relaxed atmosphere it was at college and and it was just (.) I
 352. think actually a lot of it was (.) to fill time in
 353.V. mmm
 354.R. because we didn't
 355. do very much at class we did everything at home
 356.V. right (.) I mean (.) well
 357. fair enough I mean it it was actually good for me cos I got them all
 358. back
 359.R. yeah
 360.V. which has been a problem that
 361.R. yeah
 362.V. a lot of people haven't
 363. returned them (.) so (.) well that's kind of more or less the (.) formal
 364. bit (.) I thought you might like to know what the (.) thinking was
 365. behind
 366.R. mmm
 367.V. the research

(discussion of aims - background information on Woolf)

- 368.R. I really enjoyed it (.) like the er (.) how the name suggests the Albert
 369. memorial
 370.V. yeah
 371. mahogany sideboards
 372.V. yeah
 373.R. I thought it was er (.) I
 374. enjoyed it (.) but I've not read anything of Virginia Woolf's
 375.V. yeah

376.R. so
 377. (.) that perhaps might be the book I should er (.) go for
 378.V. yeah the short
 379. stories seem to be more sort of (.) accessible than some of the
 380. fiction...

(discussion of Woolf's novels - suicide)

381.R. ... I really enjoyed erm (.) the descriptiveness that (.) how she was (.)
 382. er (.) hidden behind the (.) coloured (.) the gold flowers...
 383. ...and I liked the line where the erm (2) er (.) how does she put it (.)
 384. when they were (.) weren't real life they were the portraits...
 385. ... the rabbit bit (.) erm (.) which I suppose is what it's all about is
 386. not particularly what I enjoyed it was actually (.) er certain passages
 387. that erm (.) I I did enjoy... there's bits in here that erm (.) I enjoyed
 388. on the night I mean I (.) the way I've answered the questionnaire
 389. (.) I wouldn't (.) some of the the points that I've put down (.) I
 390. wouldn't say that now
 391.V. mmm (.) but that's what happens in (.) when
 392. you start reading a story in depth you see all different things that
 393. perhaps change your mind
 394.R. mmm (.) I think if I read it again (.) which
 395. I will do (.) I'm going to see it from Ernest's point of view a little
 396. bit more
 397.V. yeah (.) I wonder if that's because as well that you you've
 398. (.) seen (.) the way it could be read
 399.R. oh yes it's only because of you your
 400. comments and and
 401.V. yeah
 402. the (part) interpreted that I will look at it
 403. from his point of view and (.) I might feel a bit sorry for him (laughs)
 404.V. yeah
 405. (laughs)
 406.R. ...I felt very sorry for her when she was (.) she just kept looking
 407. at him she was at the party
 408.V. yes (.) that's right
 409.R. and she's waiting for his nose
 410. to twitch (laughs) I mean what a (.) oh (1) and it just all it took was
 411.V. yeah (laughs)
 412.R. that and then she just felt (.)
 413.V. yeah
 414.R. quite happy again
 415.V. of course there's
 416. the the thing about (.) did his nose really twitch or did she imagine it
 417.R. yeah (laughs 1)
 418.V. was he really not (.) he was just Ernest he wasn't really this King
 419. Lappin
 420.R. mmm mmm yeah (.) oh yeah

Participant Fm - Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

A. 1. It is the story of the death of a marriage contracted between two people of the
2. same class who don't know each other. At first they find common ground in a
3. shared fantasy. All too soon he abandons the fantasy as trivial concession to his wife
4. and in the face of his indifference her dream dies and with it any marriage of spirit
5. and communal sharing.

Q.2 Did you enjoy the story?

A. Not much

Q. please try to give reasons for your answer.

6. I never have been terribly fond of 'modern' literature, stream of thought etc.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

7. A. Rosalind

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

8. The author presents her as the unfortunate victim who is last to lose her illusions of
9. life.

Q.4 with which character does the author sympathise most?

A. Rosalind

Q. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

10. Rosalind is presented as the orphan taken up into a big family, the victim of middle-
11. class thoughtlessness.

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

12. Ernest is a middle-class pratt. A conforming non-entity, in fact a civil service clerk.

Participant Fm - interview

- 1.V. When you read the story (.) was there anything that reminded you (.)
 2. of your own experience (.) or
 3.R. er (.) never been a rabbit (.) no no nothing
 4. whatsoever
 5.V. no
 6.R. (nothing like this)
 7.V. right (.) didn't remind you of anything
 8. you'd (.) ever (.) read or (.) heard about
 9.R. well (.) it reminded me of (.) bits of
 10. modernist (.) writers I've read certainly
 11.V. yeah
 12.R. or so called modern as it were
 13. (.) although it's a load of
 14.V. yeah (2) ok but there was nothing in it that you
 15. thought was (.) sort of (.) you'd heard about had happened to anyone
 16. else or (.)
 16.R. I thought the basic idea of the story about marriages that
 17. don't really work
 18.V. right (1) and what about the end of the story (.)
 19. what what did you think at (.) the end what happened next (3) or
 20. did you not have any feelings
 21.R. I didn't have much feeling but I do
 22. not (.) have any empathy empathy with er (.) with (.) the modern
 23. writers Virginia Woolf (.) Joyce or any of them
 24. right
 25.R. as far as I'm
 26. concerned they were (.) over conceited and (.) there's no (.)
 27. don't have any (.) hidden depth (1) their tour de force in their own
 28. self (.) conceit
 29.V. right (.) you're not alone (.) I didn't (.) I don't like
 30. Woolf either
 31.R. no (.) I think it's a load of crap is that (laughs)
 32.V. yeah yeah
 33.R. to be quite honest (.)
 34. the story's trivial (.) she marries (.) she marries above herself by (.)
 35. (sense of) the story (.) he's got a big middle class family which is of
 36. course is out of date there's no middle (.) er it's middle class it's class
 37. without (having it as a term) these days
 38.V. yeah
 39.R. it's stultified (.) it's
 40. sexually repressed (.) the only way out is to think he's a rabbit (.)
 41. he gets bored with her goes to his club whatever (.) smokers' thing
 42. and it (.) and then she dies
 43.V. yeah
 44.R. (and and) that's all (she (.) don't need to)
 45. spend all that I (.) time telling the story
 46.V. right (.) do you think it's a bit
 47. dated (.)
 48.R. yeah it's certainly dated yes
 49.V. ok
 50.R. (yes it's)
 51.V. so (.) well that answers my
 52. next question (.) how true to life or realistic do you think the story was

- 53.R. (huffs?)
 54.V. not (.) not now
 55.R. well (.) in view of the way it's written (.) not (.) I
 56. mean the story itself is still (.) true to life (.) things collapse for various
 57. reasons but (.)
 58.V. yeah
 59.R. no
 60.V. ok (.) so there's nothing in it that you (.) thought
 61. was relevant to today (.) in the actual details of the story
 62.R. in the details of the
 63. story no not really
 64.V. right (.) ok (1) what I've actually got is some (.) oh (.) if I've
 65. brought them with me (.) some interpretations that have been put on
 66. the story (1) and (.) I'm asking to see whether they agree with them or
 67. not (5) and I've got a scale (.) sort of (.) totally disagree to (.) totally
 68. agree
 69.R. yes
 70.V. if you could just say whether you agree with what's being
 71. said or not
 72.R. (yeah ok)
 73.V. (.) so we've got Rosalind becomes obsessed with her
 74. imaginary world I don't know if you can actually remember the story
 75.R. I can remember the story
 76.V. yeah
 77. I'm good at memory (remembering?)
 78.V. yeah (.) and we've got one which is (.) totally
 79. disagree
 80.R. well (.) yes I mean she's (.) difficult to say so I should say seven
 81.V. right
 82. (.) yeah that's totally agree
 83.R. yeah
 84.V. ok (.) Rosalind neglects her husband
 85.R. (1) er-r (.) I don't think that really comes out (.) I (.) I wouldn't put
 86. (1) I think I think (.) say make that a three I think we'll have a
 87. disagree side
 88.V. yeah (.) ok (1) Ernest fails to participate in the imaginary
 89. world
 90.R. he does at the end (.) so yes at the end yeah
 91.V. yeah (.) at the end
 92. yeah people seem to think that that's (.) sort of (.) something that
 93. develops
 94.R. mm
 95.V. towards the end (.) Ernest neglects his wife
 96.R. oh definitely
 97.V. (1) Rosalind makes no effort to share the responsibilities of marriage
 98.R. (2) don't think that would've cropped up in the story either (laughs)
 99. ok (.) so
 100.R. well (.) let's put not sure down for that
 101.V. not sure (.) ok (.) Ernest
 102. loses interest in the imaginary world he helped to create
 103.R. I'd agree (.) I would
 104. agree with that
 105.V. (1) the story describes the insensitivity of a husband to the
 106. emotional world of his wife (3) kind of
 103.R. yes (.) but (.)

- 104.V. not totally
- 105.R. not totally
106. five (.) well yes he does (.) but I don't think it's (.) I think that that
107. that there's more (.) meat in the (.) question than there is in the story
108. (laughs)
- 109.V. (laughs) right (.) i nteresting (laughs) the story shows the
110. insensitivity of men to the emotional needs of women (1) kind of more
111. general
- 112.R. yeah yeah (.) yeah (.) make that about six
- 113.V. (1) only a couple more (.) the
114. story describes the inability of a wife to cope with the realities of
115. married lifeok (.) the story describes the unwillingness of
- 116.R. (1) I don't think either of them seem to live in anything
117. vaguely resembling the real world so (.) no (laughs)
- 118.V. no (laughs) totally
119. disagree or (.) two
- 120.R. ah two
- 121.V. ok (.) the story describes the unwillingness of
122. a wife to cope with the realities of married life slightly different (.) it's
123. not (.) inability it's unwillingness
- 124.R. again I disagree I don't (.) as I say
125. reality doesn't seem to come into the story even
- 127.V. right
- 128.R. I wouldn't describe
129. his world as one that was real
- 130.V. no
- 131.R. so I'd disagree again two
- 132.V. (1) and the
133. story describes the inability of women in general to cope with the
134. realities of life
- 135.R. oh totally disagree with that (laughs)
- 136.V. ok (.) the story shows
137. the inability of men in general to attend to the emotional needs of
138. women
- 139.R. again I disagree with that
- 140.V. great thanks (2) how (.) if you (.)
141. were asked (.) how would you describe Rosalind (.) might be difficult
142. because you haven't read the story for a while
- 143.R. no I'd describe her as er (1) sort of
144. out of her depth (1) er (.) probably ill educated (1) er (.) emotionally
145. insecure (1) er (2) nineteen twenties (.) middle class (.) lower middle
146. class (1) standard female (.) neurotic
- 147.V. right (.) and what about Ernest
148. how would you describe him
- 149.R. pratt
- 150.V. (laughs) think you said that on the
151. questionnaire (laughs)
- 152.R. yeah (laughs)
- 153.V. yeah
- 154.R. he (.) he's a civil servant (.)
- 155.V. mmm
- 156.R. middle class civil servant (1) er (.) and a pratt basically (1)
157. insensitive in himself
- 158.V. yeah
- 159.R. but (.) but (.) if if he was a female in the same

160. position he would also be insensitive (laughs)
 161.V. right (.) ok (.) were there
 162. any comments that you would have liked to make about the story and
 163. (.) weren't given the chance on the questionnaire
 164.R. (3) I (.) don't really think so (.) I just (.) don't think it (.) it it (.) it it
 165. carries (1) this long after the time it was written
 166.V. uh huh
 167.R. the (.)
 168. literature (.) seems to have (.) gone on I mean I mean when it was
 169. written it was qu modern
 170.V. yeah
 171.R. but but it now seems (.) a lot more
 172. dated than (.) literature (.) long before it (.) and
 173.V. yeah
 174.R. and a lot more
 175. modern
 176.V. yeah
 177.R. so (.) the modern is dated (.) is a nice way of putting it
 178.V. yeah
 179.R. (.) it's rubbish really isn't it let's face it
 180.V. well (.) I would agree
 181. with you (laughs) (or giggles self consciously?)
 182.R. (laughs)
 183.V. did you have any
 184. comments about the questionnaire itself
 185.R. the questionnaire was alright
 186.V. yeah (.) you
 187. didn't find any problems with it
 188.R. no (.) no questionnaire was easy
 189.V. not even
 190. the underlining bits that was
 191.R. no no
 192.V. ok (.) that's more or less it...

(discussion of aims)

- 193.R. ...halfway through the first sentence (.) I thought to myself (.) I
 194. haven't read Virginia Woolf (.) as Virginia Woolf (.) though I've
 195. come across bits of her in various things I think I've read the
 196. odd short story as a kid and that (.) but I think to myself (.) I bet
 197. this is Virginia Woolf (.) this is
 198.V. yeah
 199.R. cos it ain't James Joyce and it
 200. it's certainly (.) out of that (.) school of er (.) stream of conscious (.)
 201.V. yeah (.) that sort
 202.R. driveling and it's dated as hell
 203.V. mmm
 204.R. you just (.) halfway through
 205. the first paragraph you don't really want to get to the end (1)
 206.V. right
 207. (.) you're right
 208.R. yeah (.) it's very good at (.) er (.) shall we say (.)
 209. at describing the isolation between people because the the er (.)
 210. language used and the style is isolation isolated
 211.V. yeah

- 212.R. but there's no
 213. interconnection (.) between any of the characters (.) and (.) there's no
 214. no interconnection between them and the story (.) or the reader
 215.V. right yeah
 216.R. so

(further discussion of aims)

- 217.R. ...the character's actually a caricature (.) Ernest is (1) I mean (.)
 218. he's actually Victorian isn't he I mean in a sense he's a perfect
 219. Victorian (1) crusty (.) boring person so (1) he he's dead obvious
 220. to pick out ah (.) that's the kind of bloke (.) bloke's aren't
 221. supposed to (.) even if blokes do sympathise with him because
 222. it sticks out a mile we're not supposed to
 223.V. mmm
 224.R. (laughs)
 225.V. yeah...

(discussion of point of view - theory)

- 226.V. ...you know about the background to Woolf don't you (.) that she
 227. actually (.) committed suicide
 228.R. yeah yeah (.) thank God (laughs)

Participant Gf – Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

1. Rosalind's experience of the marriage in its social context, implicitly contrasted with
2. conventional phrases of description and value – also her experience of fantasy as a
3. coping strategy which eventually failed.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

4. quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

5. A nice idea in a well-told tale with believable characters.

Q.3 With which character do you sympathise most?

6. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

7. She is given space and explanation in the story, which leads to an understanding of
8. her experience in a subjective (i.e. identifying-with-other) sort of way.

Q.4. With which character do you think the author sympathises most?

9. Can't tell –so much of Rosalind in the story, yet there might be sympathy elsewhere,
10. if explored

Q. 5 In your opinion, what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

11. The story starts with the wedding, yet with an air of that being an end rather than a
12. beginning – this to me is a clear signal that 'the casue' lies before. Applying
13. common sense rather than story logic, they each needed to talk and listen properly,
14. and get to know and respect each other as they were, both before and after
15. marriage, and perhaps think better of marrying each other.

Participant Hm - Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, give a summary of what the story is about.

1. Rosalind and Ernest marry. Rosalind is aware she has married above her station and
2. so fantasises about her and Ernest being simple rabbits. Rabbits because Ernest
3. comes from a large family and that can easily be associated with rabbits. Ernest's
4. mother is one of the old matriarchs, ruling the family. Rosalind fantasises seeing
5. them as if they had no wealth i.e. her father in law as a poacher, having no respect
6. for life.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

7. Yes

Q.3 Please try to give reasons for your answer.

8. It explained how people fantasise when trapped in a relationship which they feel
9. they don't belong to. Also it showed when the love relationship had gone, when
10. Ernest said Lapinova was dead, caught in a trap, as Rosalind was trapped in a class
11. above her social standing, her own life was dead.

Q.4 With which character do you sympathise most?

12. A. Rosalind

Q.5. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

13. Rosalind seems to have married above her station. She cannot come to terms with
14. Ernest's public school and large family home, dominated by his mother.

Q.6. With which character do you think the author sympathises.

15. A. neither

Q.8. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

16. A. The author just tells the tale and leaves it to the reader as to who to sympathise
17. with. Rosalind who is new to this way of life or Ernest always reliant on others,
18. public school, matriarchal mother. Both trapped, but when Ernest breaks free there
19. has to be a little sympathy for Rosalind.

Q. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems experienced by Ernest and Rosalind?

20. A. Different class backgrounds. Ernest is used to someone being in charge. On the
21. death of his mother he takes on his mother's mantle with his domination of
22. Rosalind. Love has gone out of the window.

Participant Hm - interview

1. V. When you read the story (.) was there anything that (.) reminded you (.) of
2. anything in your own experience (.) anything that had happened to you (.) in
3. the past (.) or that you'd heard about (.) happening to someone else

- 4.P. er (.)
5. in what way like
- 6.V. was there anything that reminded you of anything at all in
7. your own life (.) I mean there doesn't have to be
- 8.P. well (.) I think erm (.) a lot
9. of people they (.) you know (.) erm (.) especially when they're a bit down and
10. that (.) use their imagination you know to (.) create a (.) little fantasy (.) you
11. know (.) just to (.) get away from the (.) depressing mood or whatever it is (.)
12. whether it's (.) financial or whatever
- 13.V. uh huh (1) right yeah (.) was there
14. anything in it that reminded you of anything else you've ever read (.) did it
15. remind you of any other stories you've read
- 16.P. no
- 17.V. no (.) ok (.) and what did
18. you think at the end of the story what did you think happened next (.) cos it
19. (.) it finishes quite abruptly
- 20.P. finishes abruptly yeah erm (1) I'd have thought
21. erm (1) cos like (first) (.) started off (.) madly in love (is the love had) gone
22. out of the marriage
- 23.V. uh huh
- 24.P. you know and (.) she was just er (.) very (.)
25. because I presume (.) I don't know what year that was but I presume in them
26. years they didn't er get divorced so easily
- 27.V. uh (.) right yeah
- 28.P. and she just (1) she
29. just (.) stayed there and dutiful wife you can call it (.) you know
- 30.V. mm so you think
31. they stayed together
- 32.P. I presume that's what happened (.) I'd have thought so
33. (.) yeah
- 34.V. (1) how (.) realistic did you think it was (1) could you believe in the
35. characters or
- 36.P. you could yeah they (.) I mean (.) I interpreted it as
38. somebody (.) married above (.) their status (.) and didn't know (.) what they
39. were letting themselves in for like at first (.) I mean er (.) she didn't even
40. know what she was letting herself in for (.) or anything and (.) and I
41. think that's why she created a fantasy world to
- 42.V. mm
- 43.P. you know (.) look at it
44. that way (.)
- 45.V. yeah (.) so you thought it was quite realistic in that way
- 46.P. yeah (.)
47. yeah (.) it could be yeah (.) cos you know I mean (.) the er (.) think it was
48. highlighted at the er (.) wedding anniversary
- 49.V. mm
- 50.P. when they were all there
51. with their (.) ornate gold (.) offerings and she'd just the you know (.) tin
52. box or whatever
- 53.V. yeah
- 54.P. you know
- 55.V. yeah (.) ok (.) right (.) what I've got is a list
56. of interpretations that have been (.) applied to the story and I've got (.) oh
57. you did this on your original one (.) yeah (.) this is what happened (.) after
58. you did it we changed the questionnaire so that that was part of the
59. interview so you don't actually have to (1) yeah what happened was (.)

60. because (.) the one that you had seemed to be quite complicated we split
 61. them up
 62.P. mm
 63.V. made them (.) separate (.) so I don't know if you want to
 64.P. yeah (.)
 65. yeah I do
 66.V. might be worth doing (.) what happened was some people said they
 67. could agree with (.) part of (.) what I'd said and not (.) the other half (.) I
 68. don't know if you found that quite difficult if you remember (.) that was the
 69. one that we had at the beginning
 70.P. yes
 71.V. so I I think erm (.) you might have said
 72. you can agree with part of the statement but not the second bit (.) just made
 73. it more simple (.) I mean you don't have to do it again (.) erm (1) perhaps
 74. you'd just like to read through and see what you think (2) things like (.)
 75. Rosalind becomes obsessed with her imaginary world
 76.P. yes
 77.V. which you had on
 78. that one
 79.P. I put number three
 80.V. right yeah (.) right so then (I split up) Rosalind
 81. neglects her husband because (.) perhaps you could say that she was obsessed
 82. with her imaginary world but that she didn't neglect her husband
 83.P. now that's
 84.P. (.) reading it (.) on reading it again (.) erm (.) I don't think she (.) (.)
 85. neglects her husband I think the imaginary world (.) brought him (1) if you
 86. like (.) down to her level
 87.V. right
 88.P. because she wasn't used to (.) the upbringing
 89. what he had (.) I mean
 90.V. mm
 91.P. she was like (.) an orphan and (.) an only child
 92. whereas he (.) had nine brothers and sisters
 93.V. that's right yeah
 94.P. so like the
 95. imaginary world helped her (.) you know (.) rather than neglect him
 96.V. yeah (.)
 97. that's interesting yeah (.) see that's partly why we split them up because
 98.P. mm
 99.V. yeah (.) erm (.) the second one was (.) we put that Ernest fails to participate
 100. in the imaginary world and that was separate from (.) whether he neglected
 101. his wife or not (.) so I suppose you just answered that really when you said
 102. that the imaginary world helped them
 103.P. yeah
 104.V. to sort of be involved with each
 105. other
 106.P. but (at the end of) the story Ernest (.) just gives it up (.) the imaginary
 107. world (.) and that's when (.) I think (it's just an empty marriage) and she's
 108. just er (.) in his life
 109.V. yeah (.) do you think that's his fault then (.) that he
 110. stopped (.) trying to
 111.P. I I think so (.) I think he's just (.) erm (.) wants to get on
 112. with his own (.) standing in life
 113.V. uh huh
 114.P. you know (.) I think (.) presumably

115. probably got promoted at work and that
 116.V. uh huh
 117.P. and he just wants to carry
 118. on with his standard of life (.) and just er (.) leave his wife to running the
 119. house and that
 120.V. right yeah (.) yeah (.) would you say then that she she makes
 121. no effort to share those responsibilities that he's got (.) in marriage (.) I
 122. mean that's one of the questions on there (1) erm
 123.P. no I don't think she could
 124. (.) I don't think she could (.) cope (.) with the status you know (.) with being
 125. from a different (.) erm
 126.V. yeah background
 127.P. background (.) you know (.) she er
 128. (.) I don't think she could cope and that's why she created the imaginary (.)
 129.V. mm
 130.P. world
 131.V. yeah
 132.P. you know like (.) (she were) rabbits and that's how she made it
 133. (.) work like you know
 134.V. mm(.) do you think it was mainly her world then (.) he
 135. didn't have much part in it (.) particularly towards the end
 136.P. well towards the
 137. end he didn't but at the beginning he did
 138.V. yeah
 139.P. you know (.) erm (.) because
 140. when they got married they were madly in love (.) so he participated in this
 141. er (.) fantasy world (.) just to (.) you know (.) please his wife
 142.V. yeah
 143.P. and that
 144. right (.) there were some questions at the end that were (.) attempts to
 145. generalise from the story (.) so that's (.) yeah (.) ok (.) you've already
 146. answered those (.) no point in answering (.) those again (1) did you change
 147. your mind at all (.) you know when you re-read the story this time (.) did you
 148. change your mind about which character you felt sympathy for
 149.P. what did I
 150. say on that
 151.V. I think you said you felt sympathy for Rosalind
 152.P. yeah I did I still
 153. do
 154.V. still do yeah
 155.P. you know (.) she's just married into a different station in life
 156.V. yeah
 157.P. and once the fantasy's gone out of the marriage (.) she's just left (.) to
 158. her own
 159.V. uh huh
 160.P. you know (.) devices (.) and she's not used to (.) you know(.)
 161. living in that (.) sphere like
 162.V. right (.) so you didn't change your mind when
 163. you read those different interpretations
 164.P. no
 165.V. no (.) ok (.) how would you describe
 166. Rosalind (.) could you describe her
 167.P. (.)
 168.V. yeah (.) if you had to describe her to
 169. someone (.) say she was a real person (.) how would you describe her (.) or

170. had you no (.) feelings about her
 171.P. do you mean er physically
 172.V. well (.) her
 173. personality (3) or physically (.) whatever
 174.P. (3) well I think she must have been
 175. (.) you know going from the story she must have been (.) er like a beautiful (.)
 176. looking woman or girl or whatever you know (.) and er (.) she's er (.) Ernest
 177. has been (.) you know (.) taken with her
 178.V. mm
 179.P. erm and that's (.) rather than
 180. lower his status in life (.) he thought to try (.) to bring her up to his status in
 181. life
 182.V. mm
 183.P. you know and she's er (.) she's found it very hard to cope
 184.V. yeah
 185.P. you
 186. know she's erm (1) she's tried (.) and er that's where then she's looked round
 187. the dining room and (.) given different names to the family like (.) the mother
 188. the squire and (.) you know the poacher and
 189.V. yeah (.) her way of coping
 190.P. this is
 191. her way of coming to terms with it (.) as she couldn't (.) really (.) put herself
 192. in their position
 193.V. uh huh
 194.P. you know (.) and be like them (.) she'd never (.)
 195. been like them
 196.V. yeah (.) what about Ernest (.) could you describe him(.)
 197. there's not very much about him in the story
 198.P. there's not a lot about him
 199. is there
 200.V. no
 201.P. erm (.) he seems like he's (.) after the first couple of years of
 202. marriage (.) he's just concentrated on his career (.) and his er (1) his own
 203. family upbringing
 204.V. mm
 205.P. and er (.) totally (.) ignored Rosalind
 206.V. yeah
 207.P. you know he just started to go his own way (.) but first he tried to er (.) act
 208. out a fantasy (.) because it pleased her
 209.V. mm
 210.P. you know maybe (he got her into)
 211. (.) her life (.) but once he found out she couldn't adapt (.) he er (.) he just
 212. went (.) his own way
 213.V. yeah (1) right (1)...were there any comments that you
 214. wanted to make about the story (.) that (.) you weren't given chance to is
 215. there anything that you would have wanted to say
 216.P. only that it ended
 217. abruptly...
 218.V. ...you didn't like that the (.) the way it ended
 219.P. no I (.) erm (.)
 220. it did end abruptly but I thought reading it a second time you thought that
 221. was the end the end of the marriage
 222.V. mm
 223.P. you know and er (.) that it had gone
 224.V. yeah

- 225.P. and er (.) all she was going to be then was the er Victorian dutiful wife
 226. if it was in the Victorian era or whatever
 227.V. yeah yeah (.) yeah erm (.) what about the
 228. questionnaire did you find that quite difficult
 229.P. yeah...
- 230.P. ...it seems like she's relating to rabbits because they're a cornered animal
 231. aren't they...fluffy animal and want to be cu (.) when you see children round
 232. them they just want to cuddle them don't they so (.) I think that's why she's
 233. relating to the rabbits...
- 234.P. ...I quite liked it (.) I think you've got to read it more than once...
 235.V. ...is there anything you want to ask me...
 236.P. ...yeah why did they put the double
 237. p in instead of the one p...

Participant Im

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

- 1.A. It appears to be a morality story about the shallowness of a relationship, one that
2. ends abruptly because it has no real foundation. It was a loveless marriage.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

3. A. not at all.

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

4. I may not have enjoyed it because the real message behind the piece was going
5. above my head.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

6. A. Rosalind.

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

7. A. One sympathises with anyone who is an orphan. Though young and immature,
8. she was quite perceptive and sensitive. She was clearly looking for someone to look
9. after her but this clouded her judgement.

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

10. A. Rosalind.

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

11. A. Most references to Ernest are negative, for by the end he appears to be a
12. thoroughly bad lot.

Participant Im - interview

- 1.V. was there anything in the story (.) that reminded you of your own experience
 2.P. nothing whatsoever
 3.V. right (.) was there anything in it that reminded you of
 4. anything (.) that you'd heard about (.) that happened to anybody else
 4.P. I can't recall I I would (.) I don't think so no
 5.V. or anything that you'd read
 6. about
 7.P. no
 8.V. ok (.) if you think of anything later can you let me know (.) has
 9. some (.) bearing on (.) something that I'll tell you about later (.) er (.) what
 10. did you think at the end of the story (.) what (.) did you think happened next
 11. (3) trying to think
 12.P. well no I (1) I don't think anything happens I don't think
 13. it (.) I just don't (.) think it's based on real life
 14.V. right (.) well that was my next
 15. question how realistic did you think it was
 16.P. there were slight (.) slight bits
 17. that rang true but er (1) you almost resented the time that you spent reading
 18. it
 19.V. right yeah (.) yeah (.) do you think that was the datedness of it (.) did (.)
 20. did you get that feeling that (.) it was (.) too far in the past (.) or was it just
 21. the story (.) the way it was written
 22.P. it was (.) it sounded like erm (1) at times
 23. like erm (.) an old melodrama or whatever (.) or or an old (.) romantic novel
 24. but I mean (.) or a romantic novel not particularly old (.) but I don't think it
 25. was dated reading
 26.V. right
 27.P. it was just banal
 28.V. uh huh (laughs) you haven't (.)
 29. changed your opinion from what you wrote in the questionnaire
 30.P. no no
 31.V. sort of
 32. liked it more the second time you read it than
 33.P. I probably liked it less (.) the
 34. second time (.) just (.) having to read it again which was a trial I think
 35.V. right
 36. (1) what I've got is a number of interpretations (.) and what you've got is (.)
 37. you've got a scale (.) one to seven you've probably seen these before (.) totally
 38. disagree to totally agree (.) and if you just say how much you agree with
 39. them
 40.P. yeah
 41.V. ok so the first one is Rosalind becomes obsessed with her
 42. imaginary world
 43.P. I'd s (.) totally agree with that
 44.V. Rosalind neglects her
 45. husband
 46.P. not sure about that
 47.V. so what (.) four
 48.P. four
 49.V. Ernest fails to participate
 50. in the imaginary world
 51.P. I'd say seven (1) er well it (.) yeah seven
 52.V. right

- 53.P. it seems
 54. to (.) it starts off with (1) erm (1) participation but then (.) by the end he isn't
 55. so I'm not quite sure
 56.V. right most people have said that
 57.P. oh right
 58.V. so at the end
 59. (.) by the end he's (.) failing to participate
 60.P. yeah that's right yeah
 61.V. Ernest neglects his wife
 62.P. er y (.) he does by the end yeah (.) seven I would say
 63. yeah
 64.V. right (.) so you think again that's something that develops
 65.P. yeah (.) he
 66. is (.) he doesn't at the start
 67.V. right (2) Rosalind makes no effort to share the
 68. responsibilities of marriage
 69.P. erm (1) I'd disagree with that
 70.V. right (.) that
 71. totally
 72.P. yeah
 73.V. Ernest loses interest in the imaginary world he helped to create
 74.P. I'd agree with that (.) six or (.) well seven
 75.V. seven (.) right (.) the story
 76. describes the insensitivity of a husband to the emotional world of his wife
 77.P. (2) erm well it does to a point well it I suppose I (1) yeah it does I suppose it
 78. does yeah
 79.V. right (.) is that (.) you sound like you're not sure
 80.P. six oh no six six
 81.V. ok (.) the story shows the insensitivity of men to the emotional needs of
 82. women
 83.P. I (.) I I wouldn't be sure about that (.) about four
 84.V. right (.) so you
 85. wouldn't like to generalise
 86.P. no
 87.V. the story describes the inability of a wife to
 88. cope with the realities of married life
 89.P. er seven
 90.V. the story describes the
 91. unwillingness of a wife to cope with the realities of married life (.) slightly
 92. different (.) inability to unwillingness
 93.P. erm (.) I think I I'd yeah I'd (.) seven
 94. again I think
 95.V. the story describes the inability of women in general to cope
 96. with the realities of life
 97.P. oh I wouldn't say that
 98.V. good
 99.P. no no
 100.P. I wouldn't say that
 101.V. is that totally disagree
 102.P. totally disagree
 102.V. jolly good (laughs) the story shows the
 103. inability of men in general to attend to the emotional
 104.P. I ag again one
 105.V. right
 106. (1) great (1) they were part of the original questionnaire but people decided

- 107.P. yeah
 108.V. it was too long
 109.P. yeah (1) right did reading (.) the different
 110. interpretations make you feel any differently about the story
 111.P. not at all no
 112.V. didn't change (.) which character you felt sympathy for
 113.P. didn't really feel
 114. sympathy for ei for either of them really
 115.V. right (1) erm (2) right do you know
 116. why that is (.) you you can't say why
 117.P. well I (.) I just (.) it just seemed (1) there (.)
 118. there was (.) I you didn't evoke sympathy for (.) you can't (.) get sympathy
 119. for people in (.) seven or eight pages of (.) of a short story I don't think (.)
 120. well certainly not a short story (.) of that nature
 121.V. yeah
 122.P. which for me seems to
 123. lack any substance or whatever I mean (.) there are good short story writers
 124. but (.) that that (.) this was so poorly written I thought (.) that it wouldn't (.)
 125. evoke any sympathy
 126.V. right (.) so it didn't make any difference that it was
 127. Virginia Woolf (.) you still thought
 128.P. I've never read any of hers before (.) so
 129.V. no
 130.P. it didn't make any difference
 131.V. right (.) how would you describe Rosalind if
 132. you had to describe her to someone
 133.P. er (.) a dilitante
 134.V. oh (laughs) I don't
 135. know if I can spell that (laughs) ok (.) right
 136.P. erm (.) slightly empty headed
 137. (.) and erm (2) I wish that fly would go away
 138.V. yeah (.) I know
 139.P. and erm (.)
 140. lacking in any substance and possibly infatuated to start with
 141.V. uh huh (1)
 142. right (.) what about Ernest (.) how would you describe him (1) there's not as
 143. much in the story about him
 144.P. there's not as much in the story no er (1) it's
 145. that (.) it's that (2) loose that you can't really base any opinion about him I
 146. suppose he's erm (1) he's slightly un(.) well he's (.) he's unthinking I suppose
 147. towards the end and (2) harsh (2)
 148.V. so you haven't got any (.) sort of (.) strong
 149.P. not any particularly strong views about him no (.) he's not a charlatan or
 150. anything but er (.) I just think it's er (.) it seems as though it's a relationship
 151. that's based on very little really
 152.V. mm
 153.P. certainly not love I don't think
 154.V. mm (1)
 155. were there any comments that you'd have liked to make about the story and
 156. weren't given the space to on the questionnaire (laughs) that I can actually
 157. print
 158.P. well I (.) don't think it's got all that much (.) literary merit (.) from
 159. what I can see (.) erm (.) and I (1) and the message that it's (.) it's putting
 160. across is (3) is not particularly er (1) merit worthy I mean (.) it seems (.) it
 161. seems a convoluted way of putting a message across anyway

- 152.V. right (1) so you
 153. think (.) that she had (.) actually got the intention when she wrote it that
 154. she wanted to say something
 155.P. she possibly did but erm (1) I don't know
 156. whether it's (.) written from a sort of (.) feminist viewpoint I don't know but
 157. er (.) she possibly (.) she (.) I think the message that she had was about the
 158. shallowness of relationships
 159.V. right
 160.P. I think she perceives women maybe to be
 161. the victims (.) of the relationship
 162.V. yeah that's more or less the questions (.) that I
 163. was going to ask but erm ...

(discussion of Woolf's background etc)

- 164.P. ...but there are ways and mean of doing it that could evoke sympathy (.) I
 165. just think this is such (.) like a penny dreadful novel or whatever that (.) that
 166. it (1) I (.) I can't quite see (.) that's probably possibly the message that she's
 167. trying to get over but (.) I think it's a convoluted way of er (.) of getting it
 168. across (.) using such shallow characters

(further discussion of Woolf)

- 169.V. did you have any comments about the questionnaire (.) did you find it quite
 170. (.) time consuming
 171.P. not necessarily time consuming I mean (.) if you regard
 172. half an hour as time consuming like
 173.V. what about the underlining bit (.) was
 174. that a chore
 175.P. I can't (.) I can't recall...

(about Rosalind)

- 176.P. I suppose you could look at her and say that she's just empty headed (.)
 177. and I suppose if (.) if she's lacking (.) if she's not particularly er (.) well if
 178. she's got herself into a relationship (.) just by infatuation or whatever (.) erm
 179. I suppose you've got some sympathy for her but (.) she seems such such a (.)
 180. so empty headed to me that (.) I don't think she evokes any sympathy and I
 181. (.) and he's so (1) well I wouldn't even say one dimensional you can't even
 182. draw any conclusions about him (.) maybe that he's a (.) male chauvinist pig
 183. I don't know...
 184. ...why didn't she make him a wife beater or something like
 185. that then she might evoke more sympathy I don't know (.) but I suppose
 186. she's trying to say (.) er (.) he's an emotional wife beater

(discussion of sympathy for Ernest)

- 187.P. ...I suppose it's sympathy because they're both trapped in a loveless
 188. marriage (.) and maybe he's (.) you know that's a way (.) his way of getting
 189. out of it (.) he's not a particularly sympathetic character but er...
 190. ...I look at them and I think well I can't give a (.) I can't care a jot really
 191. about any of them
 192.V. no
 193.P. just (.) let them get on with it (.) I have no (.) I have

194. some sympathy towards her (.) none towards him
 195.V. mm
 196.P. but (.) it just seems a
 197. (1) lame way of (.) of putting over a message I think
 198.V. mm
 199.P. (.) it doesn't
 200. involve you
 201.P. yeah (.) it doesn't involve me and I (.) I don't feel (.) I don't read
 202. this (.) and start (.) stamping my feet with rage over (.) over what she's (.)
 203. over what's been done to her
 204.V. I agree (.) I don't either
 205.P. I mean if (.) there are
 206. ways of (.) of (.) ways and means of getting over emotional cruelty...

(discussion of Yellow Wallpaper)

- 207.P. ...I looked at this in the sense of (.) also (.) would anybody make a film of this
 208. and I was trying to think of what actor
 209.V. right
 210.P. or actress you'd cast in either
 211.P. of the parts
 212.V. (laughs) and nobody'd take it
 213.P. that's right (.) it's so (.) it's so (.) one
 214. dimensional
 215.V. mm
 216.P. that you couldn't (.) I mean that's not the (.) relative issue
 217. but I was just thinking in my own mind (1) you know who could play the
 218. part and
 219.V. mm
 220.P. I suppose they're so one dimensional that (1) I don't think even
 221. a great actor would take any of those parts
 222.V. yeah...

(discussion of theory)

- 223.P. ...I wouldn't want to read any more on the basis of that...

Participant Lf - Questionnaire Responses

1. In a few sentences, try to explain what the story is about.

- 1.A. The masculine assumption that once married woman should be satisfied with her
- 2.lot. The reality that in fact many women were not. Rosalind is a victim in that
- 3.although she is aware that things are not as they should be she is neither intelligent
- 4.or strong minded enough to change them.

Q. Did you enjoy the story?

5.A. not at all

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

6. Too 'fanciful'

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

7. A. Ernest

Please try to give reasons for your answer

8. Rosalind came over as insecure and empty headed, boring. Ernest was pompous
- 9.and probably overbearing, but he did try to please her by playing her silly game –
- 10.until the first flush of her attraction for him faded - typical!

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

11.A. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

12. Why write the story at all, if otherwise?

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

13. A.The assumption prevalent at the time the story was set, that man was a superior
14. being.

Participant Mm - Questionnaire responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

1. A. The story is about how Rosalind increasingly feels trapped by her marriage, and
2. there is a sense of inevitability about this, that it happens in all marriages. Her only
3. means of escape is in the imaginary world of rabbits that she constructs, but when
4. her husband loses interest in this, the marriage for her is over.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

(not answered)

Q.3. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

5. On the plus side, the story is well written quite imaginative, mildly amusing with a
6. nice touch of cynicism. I especially liked the ending (last sentence). However at
7. face value, it seems odd that we are expected to believe that a marriage has failed
8. simply because Ernest no longer wishes to partake of his wife's imaginary world. If
9. this is supposed to be a symbol, I don't think it's a very good one.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

10. A. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

11. The main reason is that the story is told mainly from Rosalind's point of view!
12. She is seen to be sensitive, alone and pitted against Ernest's family; towards the
13. end of the story he appears cold and insensitive.

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

14. A. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

15. As in 3, the fact that the story is told mainly from R's point of view betrays the
16. author's sympathies. There is no criticism of her behaviour, whereas Ernest is
17. portrayed at the end of the story as being insensitive.

Q.5. In your opinion, what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

18. Their different family backgrounds.
19. The fact that she has nothing to do all day seemingly, whereas he has a job to go 20. to.
- His loss of interest in the imaginary rabbit world.
21. (I'm not really sure)

Participant Nm - Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

A. 1. Young wife of limited background but vivid imagination marrying a slightly older
2. man (of business) from a wealthy family background. Her imaginative world clashes
3. with his dull one- even though he humours her at first. Her growing disillusionment
4. with him and marriage are mirrored by her loss of her free identity - Lapinova. At
5. the end Lappin strangles Lapinova.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

A. 6. Quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

A. 7. Enjoyed the intricacies of the plot and the amount left to the imagination of the
8. reader by the author.

Q.3. How would you describe Ernest?

A. 9. dull unimaginative and lacking in real love. His coldness causes the marriage to
10. end before he kills her.

Q. 4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

A. 11. totally unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

12. his character and behaviour are presented in a detached casual unsympathetic sort
13. of way.

Q.5. How would you describe Rosalind?

A. 14. Simple imaginative child of nature who is strangled as much by the dullness of
15. her husband long before his hands end the marriage. The rabbit/hare imaginative
16. life is her escape from the dullness and imprisonment of the Thorburn world in
17. which she has placed herself. Money and comfort are stultifying to her.

Q. 6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

A. 18. very sympathetic
19. even if she is a little silly and childlike

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

A. 20 I feel sorry for her innocence which she has lost and her imagination which she
21. uses to create her attractive world - a world which she is allowed to have until he
22. tires of it and her.
23. She is the victim of her own imagination and her silly marriage.

Q. 7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

24. A. mostly Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

A. 25. Much of the passage is seen through the eyes of Rosalind and we are directed
26. towards sympathy with her.

Q.8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

A. 27. Woman - there is a lightness of touch and an empathy with the female persona.

Participant Of - Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

A. 1. The woman is trying to find a means to make her marriage tenable for herself.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

A. 2. quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

A. 3. I found it quite interesting to see how the woman tried to find ways to accept her
4. marriage even though, from the beginning, she instinctively knows that she has made
5. a big mistake.

Q. 3. How would you describe Ernest?

A. 6. (probably by using taboo language)
7. Initially prepared to enter a private world but increasingly bored by it and eventually
8. totally out of sympathy with it.

Q.4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

A. 9. fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

A. 10. My sympathies deteriorated for Ernest because I was more 'in tune' with the
11. female view point as presented in the story. His character is presented as being a
12. boring one. She tries to make him interesting using fantasy.

Q.5. How would you describe Rosalind?

A. 13. She appears to be a little immature but tries to find an imaginative way of
14. accepting her marriage. Ernest is so boring (as is her life) that she relies more and
15. more on fantasy. She is childish but this is a survival strategy.

Q.6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

A. 16. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

A. 17. Ernest's cruelty in destroying the fantasy that has kept the marriage going
18. makes me feel more sympathetic to Rosalind than I did at the beginning of the
19. story.

Q. 7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

A. 20. neither

Please try to give reasons for your answer

A. 21. S/he illustrates that this couple are not suited to each other. This is established
22. at the beginning of the story and the writer illustrates the frailties of both

23. characters who are revealed as opposites.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

A. 24. I think the story was written by a woman. Actually, I am not sure so I've given

25. a reason what a female writer's motives might be in writing this story.

Q. 9 Please try to give reasons for your answer.

A. 26. On the surface, at least, the woman is made victim of her own fantasy but as

27. there seems to be a deeper level of meaning to Rosalind's fantasy (i.e. to survive

28. being married to someone who becomes increasingly (or more obviously) boring) I

29. think that some women may be more aware of this.

Participant Rm- Questionnaire Responses

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A marriage is turning from fantasy into reality!

Q. 2 Did you enjoy reading it?

2. o.k.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

3. The concept of the secret 'rabbit' life was mildly amusing but I thought the style
4. rather twee and the characters uninteresting

Q.3 How would you describe Ernest?

5. Characterless

Q. 4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

6. no opinion

Please try to give reasons for your answer

7. he only exists as the object of Rosalind's thoughts. He is rarely if ever the agent of
8. action but behaves almost automatically or by reaction

Q. 5 How would you describe Rosalind?

9. Imaginative, sad, foolish

Q. 6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

10. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

11. She seems to have no reason to be attracted to Ernest (before the rabbit fantasy).
12. The fantasy is a positive approach to their relationship – an attempt to impose a
13. meaningful metaphor by which to live.

Q. 7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

14. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

15. She is the focus of attention. When the marriage breaks down it is because her
16. effort to give it meaning are thwarted by Ernest's apathy.

Q. 7 Do you think the story was written by a woman or man?

17. Woman

Please try to give reasons for your answer

18. It is written from the woman's point of view and focuses on her feelings; it shows 19. little real interest in the masculine position

Participant Sf – Questionnaire Responses

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. How relationships start off original, new and with enthusiasm then through its
2. course it gradually alters owing to one or even both of the people changing
3. through their lives. Thus, as a result, the couple become distant and obtain
4. opposing personalities, hence the break up of the relationship at the end: 'so that
5. was the end of that marriage'.

Q. 2 Did you enjoy reading it?

6. very much

Please try to give reasons for your answer

7. It is original and clear

Q. 3 With which character do you sympathise most

8. Both

Please try to give reasons for your answer

9. Although Rosalind is central in the work and because of the way the author has
10. portrayed her and her thoughts, obviously enabling the audience to feel for her and
11. her lost relationship at the end, I also feel sympathy for Ernest because even though
12. he has lost in his relationship, he does not even recognise it and has obviously
13. changed for the worse as he does not realise what he has let slip away. Ernest has
14. become the lost one out of the two even though Rosalind is the one that suffers
15. because she acknowledges it.

Q. 4 With which character does the author sympathise most?

16. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer

17. The author concentrates on how Rosalind's world and relationship with Ernest
18. affects her. She lets the audience understand quite vividly what is going on within
19. her mind – right from the start, therefore she (the author) can put across just how
20. she would like the audience to respond to her character Rosalind.

Participant Tf – Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what you think the story is about.

1. Two people living in fantasy land.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

2. A. not at all

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

3. incomprehensible.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

A. Ernest

4. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

5. Rosalind lives in a world of her own.

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

A. Rosalind

6. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

Because it is all written from Rosalind's point of view.

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

7. A. Rosalind is not satisfied with the man she married so invented the silly idea of

8. him being a rabbit.

Participant Um - Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

- A. 1 The private world of a married couple in which Rosalind comes to feel secure.
- 2. The construct of the marriage breaks down and Rosalind expects to die "...hands at
- 3. back of neck". Whether Ernest has killed her is open to question but the marriage is
- 4. worthless now and the childish construct has been the cement of it in the past.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

- A. 5. ok

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

- 6. Interesting images - concept rather cliched - emotions invoked intellectually so
- 7. rather dated in effect.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

- A. 8. neither

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

- A. 9. I don't identify with either

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

- A. 10. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

- A. 11. Ernest changes first and instigates the loss of the dream

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

- A. 12. That the relationship is sustained by an unrealistic view of the pair one to
- 13. another. They use the fiction to avoid real contact.

Participant Vf - Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

A. 1. A woman trapped by marriage and society. Desperate for some sort of life that is
2. hers and no-one else's - her imaginary escape.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

A. 3. very much

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

4. Strange, powerful, tragic and disturbing

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

A. 5. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

A. 6. A. She is the main subject matter of the piece.
7. She is the only character we are given an insight into

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

A. 8. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

A. 9. The author offers only Rosalind's point of view

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

A. 10. Lack of understanding of Rosalind's needs by Ernest. Her need to retain an
11. identity of her own.

Participant Xm

Questionnaire responses.

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

1. A. The special relationship between two people, where escapism is the only chance
2. these two people have of living a life with any hope of surviving.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

3. A. Not much

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

4. This was a very difficult piece of work to follow. The rabbit references although
5. symbolic, were over emphasised and mentioned too often.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

6. A. neither

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

7. Neither of the characters had any appealing qualities.

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

8. A. Rosalind

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

9. The story revolves around this character, and she is portrayed as being weaker and
10. defenceless.

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

11. A. A large jar labelled 'drugs', severe hallucinogenics inside. Rosalind is a
12. schizophrenic with little relation to her surrounding world.

Appendix Seven: Participant Profiles – Re-writing Experiment

Participant	Age-group	Education	Literature (Training)	Literature (Pleasure)
Df	36-46	Further	'O' level literature	Local history, humour, classical fiction (Dickens, Hardy)
Jf	16-25	Higher	P.G. student W/S	Comedy, S.F. , historical, philosophy novels
Kf	16-25	Higher	B. ed in Literature. P.G. student W/S	
Wf	16-25	Higher	P.G. student W/S	Detective, pagan, contemporary women's fiction

Appendix Eight: Questionnaire and Interview Transcripts, Re-writing Experiment

Participant Df

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what the story is about.

A. 1. The differences between two married adults and how love is blind in the early
2. days of their marriage. But for one partner marriage/the world becomes more
3. realistic but for the other it remains a fantasy.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

A. 4. Not much

Please try to give reasons for your answer

5. I found it terribly depressing. I felt as if I was married to this inadequate individual
6. called Ernest. I was boring too - like having to play a prolonged game with a small
7. child.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

A. 8. Jane

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

9. I felt as if I was Jane - progressively becoming more mature and responsible - but .
10. realising that I had a pathetic inadequate man for a husband.

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

A. 11. Ernest

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

12. It is written from Ernest's viewpoint and expresses and demonstrates his fears and
13. his need to retreat into a safe, albeit, fantasy realm - and where he is a dominant
14. character.

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Jane?

A.15. Jane has been brought up in a large family and has learned to cope with people
16. and personalities and has developed a sense of security from the family situation.
17. Ernest however never developed a sense of security or the ability to deal with
18. people and life realistically - because perhaps he was an only child and worse an
19. orphan.

Participant D f Interview

- 1.V. Right (.) the one thing I didn't ask on the questionnaire was (.) about
2. marital status (.) and if you're married (.) ask ask you whether
3. you're married or not
- 4.P. and and why (.) why do you need to know know that (.) what does
5. that
- 6.V. if (1) if I can tell you after the (.) I mean you don't have to answer
7. (.) I'll tell you afterwards when I
- 8.P. does it have some bearing then
- 9.V. (.) I don't know (laughter) this is what I'm hoping to find out
- 10.P. oh well no I'm not married no
- 11.V. erm (.) right (1) ok (.) erm (1) right (.) after you'd read the story (.)
12. what (.) what did you think about it (.) did you have any feelings (1)
13. sort of (.) what might happen next
- 14.P. oh what might happen next (1) erm (.) it seemed a silly ending if that
15. was the end I thought it was a silly ending (.)
- 16.V. yeah
- 17.P. erm (.) because I thought in
18. real life (.) you'd have to talk things through (.) rather than
- 19.V. right
- 20.P. the the wife being
21. so dismissive
- 22.V. yeah
- 23.P. it seemed just cut and dried (.) so erm (.) I don't
24. really know what I would have thought beyond that
- 24.V. right you had no
25. no idea what
- 26.P. it just said it was so final it said (.) that (.) marriage was a (.) erm
27. (.) so that was the end of that marriage
- 28.V. yeah (1) and that was it
- 29.P. so that
30. for me yeah was (.) it
- 31.V. right
- 32.P. no further discussion (laughs)
- 33.V. and erm (.)
34. how sort of realistic do you think it was (.) how true to life
- 35.P. not true to life at all
- 36.V. ok (.) any reasons you can give
- 37.P. ah well I think generally people that are adults wouldn't be
38. engaging in such puerile (.) nonsense if they were getting married
39. and (.) er even if they were living together I mean if they were little
40. children eight and nine year olds yes but not adults (.) so I can't
41. understand at all where the idea came from (laughs)
- 42.V. (laughs) ok (.)
43. right (.) where there any places in the text that you could have
44. marked that might sort of remind you of your own experience or
45. (.) anybody else's experience or something that you've read about
46. you might want to re-read it (.) erm (.) anything that sort of

47. struck you as being particularly (.) erm something that you'd (.)
 48. you know experienced yourself or that you'd heard about
 49.P. erm only again as children we used to play silly games like this
 50.V. yeah
 51.P. you know pretending to be things and (.) the pretence would (.)
 52. give you like erm (.) courage to do things you know if if you
 53. pretend you're such and such you know you were more daring if
 54. you were (.) er (.) masquerading as not what you really were
 55. so as I say as children
 56.V. uh huh
 57.P. and then the only other thing (.) was
 58. where he was sat down to dinner I mean I think we've all
 59. experienced a a feeling of being out of your depth at certain
 60.V. yeah
 61.P. times
 62. but I would think that was a normal response but to start thinking
 63. of (.) being a rabbit and (.) (laughs) (.) right a hare
 64.V. I've got a confession to make now
 65.P. oh have you
 66.V. the story that you've
 67. got has been re-written (.) I I said it was adapted
 68.P. ah
 69.V. which is why the
 70. the questionnaire that you got asks you questions about Rosalind
 71. (laughs) this is the
 72.P. ah
 73.V. original story which is written by Virginia Woolf
 74. Lappin and Lapinova (.) and the difference was that in the original
 75. (.) er Rosalind is the main character in the story and she tells it (.)
 76.P. ah
 77.V. so instead of Ernest saying perhaps sh perhaps he would never get
 78. used to the fact that he was (.) whatever (.) you've got Rosalind
 79. saying perhaps she would never get used to the fact that she was
 80. Mrs. Ernest anybody (.) so I'll I'll let you keep that one
 81.P. oh right yeah
 82.V. so it was kind of erm (.) what happened was a lot of people got the
 83. original story and were given exactly the same questionnaire as you I
 84. forgot to change it for people that got the rewritten version
 85.P. oh
 86.V. the the
 87. idea was to see whether people responded differently according to
 88. whether it was a male or a female who is the main character in
 89. the story
 90.P. I see
 91.V. so you can actually keep that have a (.) have a compare
 92.P. throw new light on it
 93.V. that's right yeah
 94.P. ah
 95.V. erm (.) I've got another
 96. confession to make which is that (.) er (.) because there are more

97. people that have done the original story all the questions that I've
 98. got now (.) relate to the original one
 99.P. oh do they
 100.V. so I don't know whether
 101. (.) you actually want to (.) sort of (.) read through it
 102.P. and do another
 103. one
 104.V. well it (.) you don't have to do another one
 105.P. no (.)
 106.V. (.) no because the
 107. story's exactly the same it's just it's changed slightly according to
 108. it's male or female
 109.P. I see yeah
 110.V. so if you could (.) I've I've not tried this
 111. with anyone so I don't know whether you'd be able to answer the
 112. questions (.) if you like we could perhaps play it by ear (.) and see
 113. what you think if you find it too difficult then we'll leave it (.) erm
 114.P. would
 114. I need do I need another questionnaire to (.) and I'd have to
 115. remember what the questions
 116.V. well I'll ask you the questions that w (.)
 117. that were on the questionnaire if if you think you can (.) sort of (.)
 118. remember the story as it was (.) I'll I'll point out the things that
 119. were changed (.) erm (1) the reason it was changed to Jane was to
 120. to make it the equivalent of Ernest if you like (.) because (.) erm (.)
 121. in the (.) original story (.) she says she would have preferred
 122. Timothy, Antony or Peter (.) so I changed that to Ernest would
 123. have preferred Rosalind, Francesca (.) do you see what I mean
 124. he was trying to imagine someone different (.) and the names were
 125. trying to reflect that (.)
 126.P. so you're saying the story originally that I
 127. had was told from (.) Ernest's (.) point of view
 128.V. Ernest's point of view (.) yeah
 129.P. now this is from
 130. someone called Rosalind
 131.V. this is Rosalind who is actually (.) Jane
 132.P. oh
 133.V. (laughs) exactly the same
 133.P. yeah
 134.V. so in the original story you had Ernest
 135. married to Jane (.)
 136.P. yeah
 137.V. and it was Ernest telling the story
 138.. that's right
 139. yeah
 140.V. in this one you've got Rosalind telling the story and she's
 141. married to Ernest
 142.P. yeah (.) and so is Rosalind at the end (.) erm
 143. (.) the one that's still fantasising
 144.V. that's right

145.P. I see
 146.V. so at the end
 147. you've got (.) yes he said at length (.) poor Lapinova (.) erm
 148. caught in a trap he said killed and he sat down and read the
 149. newspaper
 150.P. ah
 151.V. and so that was the end of that marriage
 152.P. oh so yeah I
 153. see what you mean it's twisted round
 154.V. () yeah yeah
 155.P. yeah yeah
 156.V. so
 157. if you like we we'll try (.) the questions and if you can't (.) cope
 158. with it (laughs)
 159.P. right (laughs)
 160.V. well we'll have to leave that
 161.P. see what happens then
 162.V. yeah
 163.P. I thought you meant you wanted me to read this again (.) later
 164. and then do the questionnaire again
 165.V. we can do it that way if you
 166. like
 167.P. oh no do it now see if I can
 168.V. erm trying to save you time really
 169.P. no it's
 170. alright
 171.V. if if it's too difficult as I say I've not tried this with anyone else
 172. because erm (.) you're kind of a guinea pig (laughs)
 173.P. (laughs) or
 174. a rabbit
 175. erm (.) er I don't know whether it's some sort of effect on the
 176. of the story but a lot of people haven't answered this one that's
 177. been rewritten so (.) it's quite strange
 178.V. right
 179.P. erm (.) does that make
 180. any difference to the character that you feel sympathy for so (.)
 181. just because it's Rosalind who's telling the story (.) I can't
 182. remember who you actually said you felt
 183.P. yeah I yeah possibly
 184. because I suppose oh I don't know (.) er it (.) yes I have to say
 185. but it might be a bit prejudiced I I couldn't abide this man being
 186. so to me pathetic
 187.V. mmm does that change if it was a woman
 188.P. I'd have wanted to bash him
 189.V. mmm yeah
 190.P. er
 191.V. so it's a woman who's doing the fantasising
 192.P. yeah yeah I think
 193. slightly although it's still wrong you you would imagine a lady
 194. being more of a furry creature (.) soft and gentle

195.V. mmm right
 196.P. so yes I think my sympathies would be (.) erm (.) more on her
 197. side in a way than they were before (.) but even so (.) I still would
 198. (.) if I was then Ernest I'd say oh come on grow up (.)
 199.V. right (.)
 200. and the the thing that he does actually say in the story is erm (.) I
 201. think it's towards the end (.) when he actually kills off (.) the
 202. fantasy if you like (.) the rabbit
 203.P. yeah yeah
 204.V. yeah
 205.P. that's it (.) but that
 206. fleeting (.) a fleeting sympathy this way round (.) for her (.) but
 207. it wouldn't erm (.) be prolonged
 208.V. right (1) again I've (.) got some
 209. different interpretations that can be put on the story it might be
 210. difficult for you because (.) you've read it from the other point
 211. of view (1) erm so I'm going to ask you if you can do this (laughs)
 212. it's difficult I know because you've got a different story in mind
 213. than I have (.) how you agree with them so (.) you've got a scale
 214. one to seven (.) one is (.) you totally disagree with the inter
 215. interpretation that I'll give you (.) and seven is (.) you totally
 216. agree
 217.P. I see
 218.V. so (.) Rosalind becomes obsessed with her imaginary
 219. world (.) that's one (.) I mean in in your
 220.P. yes
 221.V. case it was Ernest
 222.P. I'd
 223. say yes obsessed with it yes
 224.V. you'd totally agree with that
 225.P. yeah yeah
 226.V. ok (.) erm Rosalind neglects her husband
 227.P. erm let me twist it round
 228. again erm (.) no no (.) because there was the (.) do you mean at
 229. the end or during
 230.V. during
 231.P. erm no because I mean for part of the time they both
 232. engaged in the same fantasy so erm I would s(.)
 233.V. right so which you've got
 234. totally disagree to totally agree
 235.P. (1) Rosalind neglects her husband (1) disagree I would say (.)
 236. I'd put two
 237.V. two right ok (1) at the end you thought (.) that there
 238. was a possibility (.) that applied at the end did you (.) that she
 239. neglects her husband
 240.P. er
 241.V. did you think there was a feeling more
 242. towards the end that
 243.P. oh I (.)
 244.V. (.) earlier on you said you asked me

245. if I meant
 246.P. yeah
 247.V. at the end (.) did you think that there (.) at the
 248. end (.) perhaps she was doing
 249.P. erm
 220.V. she became more (.) sort of
 221. involved
 222.P. well at the end if that's the final sentence that that is the end of
 223. the marriage then that is a total (.) neglect then you know I do
 224. not want (.) but (.) in pursuance of the story as it goes on
 225.V. uh huh
 226.P. then
 227. I it I it was together (.) at one stage so that's why I'm still saying
 228.V. right
 228.P. that she didn't neglect him
 229.V. ok
 230.P. I mean she could have said after
 231. they got engaged oh my right that's it stop it (claps)
 232.V. uh huh
 233.P. and if you
 234. don't then (.) you can clear off
 235.V. right (laughs) ok (.) erm Ernest
 236. fails to participate in the imaginary world but in your case it
 237. was Jane
 238.P. erm (1) no (.) no because (.) are we still talking about
 239. (.) progressively
 240.V. yeah
 241.P. as it goes on (.) erm no he was a she was a
 242. keen participant er
 243.V. yeah
 244.P. so which end are we
 245.V. so totally disagree
 246.V. that bit's fails to participate
 247.P. I suppose so yeah I disagree that he fails
 248.V. totally
 249.P. erm
 250. jub jub jub jub jub
 251.V. it's difficult
 252.P. that's right (.) yeah he did not (.)
 253. she did not totally disagree (.) yeah
 254.V. right (.) Ernest neglects his wife
 255. now this this is (.) difficult for you because (1) say the story's
 256. being told (.) from (.) the point of view that Ernest is the one
 257. engaging in the fantasy
 258.P. yeah
 259.V. so does he neglect his wife
 260.P. (1) Ernest neglects his wife (.) erm (1) and that's like how it was
 261. anyway
 262.V. in the original
 263.P. yes yeah erm Ernest neglects his wife (.)

264. nnnnnno-o no I don't think so (.) no I disagree
 265.V. right (.) disagree
 266. (.) totally (.) not sure
 267.P. erm (1) she seems to be the one that was
 268. earning the money somehow (laughs) ()
 269.V. yeah (.) this is the problem
 with twisting the story round because a lot of the details are are
 270. (.) not (.) quite right
 271.P. where's the bit where it said they had a flat
 272. or something
 273.V. that's towards the end (.) erm
 274.P. yeah (2) right ()
 (search for place in text)
 275.V. mm (.) I can't find it now (.) I know the bit you mean (.) it says
 276. that they had a nice little flat near the tube station
 277.P. mmm well was
 278. it was it inferenced that she was doing all the go-getting well he
 279. came in from work as well didn't he
 280.V. he did
 282.P. because he sat there so
 283. there so then no he's not neglecting her they were they were
 284. pulling together erm (.)
 285.V. right
 286.P. er (.) so I disagree that he neglected
 287. his wife
 288.V. right (.) totally
 289.P. because erm (.) no I'd put two because I think
 290. there is a bit of neglect in that (.) oh wait a minute though he
 291. we're twisting it round aren't we
 292.V. uh huh
 293.P. erm (.) so it so (.)
 294.V. is it easier for you to answer (.) from your
 295. from your original story the one ()
 296.P. well wait a minute just a
 297. minute er (.) Ernest neglects his wife (1) which way round
 298. again am I thinking of it with this one that's a statement
 299. isn't it
 300.V. yeah
 301.P. does it not matter on that one which way round
 302. we're talking
 303.V. right in your in the one that you read (.)
 304.P. mmm
 305.V. he
 306. was the one that was engaging in the fantasy
 307.P. yes
 308.V. ok
 309.P. right
 310.V. in the (.)
 311. original one
 312.P. ah

313.V. the one that everybody else got (.) Rosalind (.)
 314. was the one (.) that was engaging in the fantasy (.) so if you
 315. were answering this from the original
 316.P. he's just the he's the he's the practical
 317. one then
 318.V. right (.) yeah
 319.P. (.) erm (.) well I'd leave it at that
 320.V. ok
 321.P. I'd leave
 322. it at that (.) yeah
 323.V. ok it is difficult this way
 324.P. (laughs)
 325.V. right (.) Rosalind makes
 326. no effort to share the responsibilities of marriage now this is
 327. the in the original one (.)
 328.P. right
 329.V. where Rosalind is the one who's
 330. daydreaming
 331.P. that I didn't have
 332.V. yeah (.) who's (.) if you like
 333.P. yeah
 334.V. were in Ernest's
 335. situation where she's (.) she's the one who's engaging in the
 336. fantasy
 337.P. that's it yeah I would (.) I would (.) say that's true (.) so I'd
 338. totally agree with that yes
 339.V. ok (.) Ernest loses interest in the
 340. imaginary world he helped to create and again this is the
 341. original (.)
 342.P. this is (.) Rosalind (.) yes (.) erm (.) that's right (.) totally
 343. agree
 344.V. right (.) the story describes the insensitivity of a
 345. husband to the emotional world of his wife that's where
 346. Rosalind's doing the fantasising
 347.P. yes erm yes I agree yeah this is
 348. what I felt yeah
 349.V. (.) the story shows the insensitivity of
 350. men to the emotional needs of women that should be an o
 351.P. wait just let me go back to this one the story describes the
 352. insen - sitivity (.) yes I'd still agree but that was the final
 353. thing (.) it's at the end there's no discussion if he were
 354. (.) I know it's the other way round (.) but that's what I
 355. said (.) you would discuss it wouldn't you
 356.V. yeah
 357.P. if you cared
 358. about each other you wouldn't just (.) leave it like that
 359. you'd even get help for the person I'm sure
 360.V. yeah yeah
 361.P. erm
 362.V. ok well this is slightly different because it's more general (.)

363. the story shows the insensitivity of men (.) to the emotional
 364. needs of women so it's slightly (.) more generalised
 365.P. erm (.)
 366. the story shows the insensitivity of men (.) to the emotional
 367. needs and we're still the other way round are we
 368.V. yeah
 369. whichever way is
 370.P. that's right Rosalind yeah but it does
 371. matter doesn't it
 372.V. yeah it does
 373.P. Rosalind is the one with the
 374. fantasy
 375.V. right yeah
 376.P. erm (.) no because I don't (.) I don't
 377. think so because I I think again in today's world (.) women
 378. have got to be er (.) er more (.) you know it's no good being
 379. the silly little (.) hous we want equality so (.) I could
 380. imagine (.) the husband getting chee if I was say from my
 381. point of view he a husband was driving me mad with it
 382.V. mmm
 383.P. from the other point I I would think after so many years of
 384. marriage it's about time (.) she grew up
 385.V. right
 386.P. if I was the
 387. man
 388.V. yeah
 389.P. I'd be sensitive to a point so (.) the story shows
 390. the insen
 391.V. so you're saying you can't generalise ()
 392.P. yeah erm
 393. I can't (.) let me get my bearings on which end I'm at now
 394.V. right this is totally disagree this is totally agree
 395.P. the story shows the
 396. insensitivity of men to the emotional needs of women
 397.V. (1) do you find that too hard to answer to generalise
 398.P. I (.) I
 399. yeah because I I think (1) it doesn't show total insensitivity
 400. (.) I think he would get to the end of his tether and (.) would
 401. want to scream (.)
 402.V. mmm
 403.P. so I can't
 404.V. you're not sure
 405.P. so well well
 406. which which in what I said then does that make it totally
 407. agree or (.)
 408.V. no (.) that's disagree (1) what you're saying then is
 409. that you disagree because (.) erm
 410.P. oh I see yes because he wasn't totally
 411.V. () in
 412. a way

413.P. yes (.) shall we mark that not sure (.) it's a bit of a funny
 414. one that one isn't it
 415.P. erm well I feel as if I am sure it's just how it's all
 416. worded
 417.V. yeah
 418.P. erm (2) I don't I don't think it shows the insensitivity of
 419. the man
 420.V. right
 421.P. because I would think it's it's a disregard of the sex
 422. it's something that (.) would drive anybody (.) mad (.) so I would
 423. sympathise with Ernest then
 424.V. yeah (.) whoever was doing the fantasising
 413.P. yeah
 414.V. you would sympathise with the other partner
 415.P. this is it so (.) I would
 416. go for a three then (.) that end
 417.V. right (1) not many more (laughs)
 418.P. (laughs) it's a lot of juggling isn't it
 419.V. yeah
 420.P. it certainly gets your
 421. thoughts going
 422.V. hard (.) yeah (.) er again this is more general the story
 423. describes the inability of a wife to cope with the realities of married
 424. life
 425.P. erm (.) yes (.) because Rosalind is the fantasiser yes I erm
 426. I'd agree yeah you can go for totally yeah
 426.V. the story describes the unwillingness of a wife (.) to cope with the
 427. realities of married life (.) similar
 428.P. the story
 429.V. that's inability that's
 430. unwillingness (.) there's a sort of difference
 431.P. yes the story describes
 432. the unwillingness of a wife (.) erm (3) no I don't think it got to the
 433. unwillingness stage it just seemed as if there was (.) that was it (.)
 434. like (.) you know (.) yeah there are re re (.) face reality or you don't
 435. er
 436.V. right
 437.P. erm (.) there was no debate to me er (2) so I can't (.) agree that
 438. it's the (.) unwillingness (.)
 439.V. mmm
 440.P. so
 441.V. so disagree
 442.P. yeah I'll go for three ag
 443. again I think
 444.V. ok
 445.P. yeah
 446.V. the story describes the inability of women in
 447. general (.) to cope with the realities of life
 448.P. oh gosh no (laughs)
 449.V. (laughs)

- 450.P. totally
451. disagree
- 452.V. disagree
- 453.P. yeah
- 454.V. ok (.) the story shows the inability of men in general
455. (.) to attend to the emotional needs of women (.) again that's just
456. generalising from the story
- 457.P. yeah erm the story shows the inability of men
458. (.) in general (.) to attend (.) to the emotional needs of women ye yes
459. I could (.) I'd put six there I I I yeah (.) because I say it needed
460. discussion
- 461.V. right (.) that's great
- 462.P. hoooh (laughs) help (.) it perhaps would
463. have helped if I'd known anything about (.) Virginia Woolf
- 464.V. yeah (.)
465. possibly
- 466.P. it's (.) I'm sorry about that
- 467.V. no (.) don't worry (.) er does
468. reading them different interpretations have any effect on your own
- 469.P. (2) erm (.) what do you mean
- 470.V. well (.) say you've been given some
471. interpretations that other people have applied to the story (.) does
472. that make any difference to the way you feel about it (.) what do
- 473.P. erm
- 474.V. you think about those different (.) things (.) you still agree with
475. what you said that you feel sympathy for the other partner
- 476.P. erm (.)
477. sym (.) if it was real life I would feel (1) ag I'd feel sympathy for the
478. one that carried the burden
- 479.V. uh huh
- 480.P. of coping with an unreal (.) person
481. an (.) you know that was in a fantasy world (.) but I would have
482. sympathy also with somebody that lived in a fantasy world (.) more
483. sympathy for the one that had to cope
- 484.V. uh huh
- 483.P. because it'd (.) I I
484. don't (.) I couldn't (.) stand myself living with somebody that
485. wasn't (.) seemingly not (laughs) right
- 486.V. (laughs)
- 487.P. so
- 488.V. yeah
- 489.P. so my sympathies
490. would be more with (.) Rosalind (.) this is (.) the way I it should be
491. isn't it
- 492.V. yeah
- 493.P. but (1) I would still be sympathetic enough to get
494. something sorted out
- 495.V. uh huh
- 496.P. I would go down that road first rather
497. that say right that's the marriage ended

- 498.V. right (.) ok
 499.P. (laughs)
 500.V. right (.)
 501. the next bit I I what I did was I (.) concocted some descriptions of
 502. the characters I think this is going to be too difficult for you because
 503. you've got different (.) probably (.) perceptions of the characters
 504. because you had a different story
 505.P. right
 506.V. erm (.) I suppose the best thing
 507. to do
 508.P. I'll try
 509.V. is er say (.) you know (.) how would you describe Ernest (.) in
 510. your original story
 511.P. in the original
 512.V. I think I think you've more or less done that
 513.P. pathetic
 514.V. (.) particularly
 515. like him
 516.P. yes (.) an inadequate (.) sad person
 517.V. right
 518.V. would that make any
 519. difference if you were thinking about Rosalind as being the
 520. daydeamer then (.) how would you describe her
 521.P. erm (.) (sighs)
 522. it wouldn't irritate me the same
 523.V. uh huh
 524.P. I'd have more compassion
 525. (.) rather than irritation (laughs)
 526.V. right (.) ok (laughs) yeah (.) I think (.) erm
 527. that would be too difficult for you to (.) be expected to make a
 528. a description of them from the story because you haven't had the
 529. same one (.) erm that's more or less it except that are there any
 530. comments that you would have liked to make about the story and
 531. you weren't given the chance on the questionnaire
 532.P. erm (.) was there a
 534. a before bit and an after bit cos it said it was adapted was it a
 535.V. right
 536.P. complete
 537. (.) story
 538.V. that that was a complete story except that from (.) the things
 539.P. oh
 540.V. that I told you that it was changed
 541.P. oh I see
 542.V. and it was supposed to be (.)
 543. the woman that was doing the fantasising
 544.P. yeah yes so that was what the
 545. adaptation was
 546.V. yeah (.) yeah that was the whole story
 547.P. oh
 548.V. yeah (.) did

549. you think there should have been something more
 550.P. well I I thought
 551. with it being an adaptation I thought that there might have it had
 552. been abstracted
 553.V. uh huh
 554.P. from a whole (.) and that had you got the
 555. beginning and you might have got the further well what did they
 556. discuss (.)
 557.V. yeah yeah
 558.P. or was that final (.) and I thought well that perhaps would
 559. (.) (.) a different interpretation
 560.V. right
 561.P. that they did (.) fuse something
 561. anyway (.) and (.) Rosalind Ernest were cured of this thing so (.)
 562.V. right
 563.P. and then I wouldn't have thought he was pathetic (laughs)
 564.V. (laughs) so you
 565. had a feeling it was unfinished
 566.P. er (.) yes (.) yes
 567.V. it's interesting that
 568. other people have said the same thing
 569.P. have they (.) yeah (.) yeah (.) so
 570.V. I'll tell you a bit about erm (.) I'm not (.) a Virginia Woolf scholar
 571. (.) I must admit (.) but I can tell you when it was written (.) 1939
 572. it was written...

(discussion of virginia Woolf's background - date story was written etc)

- 573.V ... it is quite different when it's written from a woman's point
 574. of view
 575.P. point of view (.) yeah (.) and in those times as well before
 576.V. that's right
 577.P. women
 578. were like liberated and (.) you know
 579.V. yeah

(discussion of intended aims of questionnaire)

- 580.P. ...it's the original one from his point of view
 581.V. that's right
 582.P. and I said I
 583. wasn't sympathising with him
 584.V. right (.) and that was because I think
 585. partly because it was a man who was doing the daydreaming
 586.P. yeah
 587.V. that's
 588. what was coming through
 589.P. yeah
 590.V. you said you wouldn't have (.) erm
 591. quite as much irritation if it had been a woman

592.P. that's right (.) yeah
 593.V. erm (.) in
 594. in the (.)
 595.P. but I don't know whether that was because it was (.) the
 596. other way round it shouldn't (.) I would have identified (.) it was
 597. because I had sympathy (.) with (.) like what you're saying the
 598. tendency (.) for women (.) over time is that (.) we've had to like
 599. come away from the closeted environment of of home
 600.V. mmm uh huh
 601. so my
 602. sympathies would but not necessarily because sh she was (1) like the
 603. subject
 604.V. mmm
 605.P. do you know what I mean
 606.V. yeah yeah...

(discussion of theories behind questionnaire)

607.P. ...that's another feeling that I I I got you know I I it's funny now
 608. you're telling me because I thought this is back to front (.) like erm
 609.V. mmm
 610. I looked up in (.) books that I have about Virginia Woolf and it was
 611. about the time that you were saying and I thought well (.) women in
 612.V. mmm
 613.P. those days like were more (1) in the home and and then I thought
 614. well perhaps it's cos she's from this posh background like you know
 615.V. yeah yeah
 616.P. erm (1) she's er out in the city kind of cos it it is London isn't it
 617.V. it is
 618. London (.) yeah yeah
 619.P. Kensington yeah so I thought well she's perhaps
 620. got some good job in the city and and but there was something I did
 621. feel that didn't represent (.) men and women
 622.V. mmm
 623.P. especially as you say
 624. at that time
 625.V. mmm
 626.P. so oh well you've clarified a lot of () (laughs)
 627.V. yeah (laughs)

(discussion of my reasons for doing the research - moving on to discussion of John Fowles The Collector)

628.P. ...erm (.) yeah I mean another woman could have (.) I could grab
 629. you and lock you somewhere I'm not going to (laughs)
 630.V. yeah yeah (laughs)
 631.P. erm (.)
 632. it was just a a perverted erm action that he wanted (.) you know
 633.V. mm
 634.P. to keep this woman for himself (.) for an or a woman to keep her

635. son so I I don't agree (.) no I do not agree that the the viewpoint
 636.V. yeah yeah
 637.P. person who's (.) the story it's from whose view viewpoint is I you
 638. don't (.) necessarily sympathise...

(Discussion of feminist 'reading against the grain' -)

Respondent Jf Questionnaire Responses

Q.1. In a few sentences, try to explain what the story is about.

1. The newly-wed husband coming into a family in which he feels totally out of his
2. depth - creating a fantasy world to soften the blow and to provide a way of
3. distinguishing his wife from the grandness of her family. The links with her family
4. - for her - end up being the stronger - they and him live in separate worlds - they
5. the hunters, he the hunted/his fantasy/ protection destroyed - there was nothing else
6. to hold on to.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

A.7. quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

8. Different angle on the dilemmas and coping mechanisms - in a literal/metaphorical
9. marriage of opposites- futility of fantasy in the long term - trying to find two
10. common ground, where maybe there wasn't any. Two main characters drawn
11. relatively clearly, though frustratingly written to make the main female character
12. more unsympathetic - her loyalty to her family is seen as hurting him - she comes
13. across as hard, especially at the end.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

A. 14. both

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

15. Ernest is too good to be true - romantic dreamer/innocent at sea - seems very
16. naive - the other character Jane is stronger but ambiguous - was she playing along
17. with his fantasy all along - then bored with it - wanted to communicate with him
18. directly ie not using rabbit metaphors - could not succeed - extremely frustrating.

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

A.19. Ernest

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

20. he is described in more gentle terms - it was him initiating the fantasy of the rabbit

21.- the romantic dreamer let down by reality - who (once) lost without the dream.

Q.5 In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Rosalind?

A.22. Their two worlds appear to be very separate - Ernest appears to be very

23. conscious of this - Rosalind doesn't think he should need this indefinitely i.e not

24. after being married for two years - should have got used to the ? intensely

25. frustrated.

Respondent Kf - Questionnaire responses

Q.1 In a few sentences, try to explain what you think the story is about.

A. 1. The relationship between two people who, although seem to love each other, do
2. not have much in common. They build a fantasy world to sustain their relationship.

Q. 2. Did you enjoy the story?

A. 3. not much

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

4. The characters were not very interesting. I couldn't feel any empathy or particularly
5. take an interest in their life.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

A. 6. neither

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

7. I don't sympathise with Ernest because he seems to be moulding Jane to what he
8. wants. Jane's character is not really developed enough. Ernest seems to be trying to
9. control Jane.

Q.4 With which character does the author sympathise most.

A. 10. Ernest

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

11. It's written from his point of view. It is his feelings and thoughts that the reader is
12. told about. The way the author describes the death of Lappin and terror she
13. describes Ernest as having.

Q.5. In your opinion what is the case of the problems between Ernest and Jane?

14. The fantasy world of Lapinova and Lappin becomes all they have to share with
15. each other. They do not seem to be interested in each others lives. When this
16. world is destroyed there is nothing left for them to retreat to in order to save their
17. relationship.

Respondent Wf - Questionnaire responses.

Q.1 In a few sentences, try to explain what the story is about.

- A. 1. Two people trying to create their own world to cope with life because they find
 2. it difficult to handle the 'real' world. This only works for a while because the 'real'
 1. world - their marriage - still affects the fantasy. When the marriage is over so is
 2. the story.

Q.2. Did you enjoy the story?

- A. 5. quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

3. It had a feeling of suspense and possible future catastrophe. I wanted to know
 6. what happened next because I got the impression that something was going to go
 7. wrong.

Q.3. With which character do you sympathise most?

- A.8. Jane

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

8. I felt Ernest to be pathetic, someone I couldn't respect and that he initially imposed
 9. his fantasy on Jane and tried to mould her. Jane is the stronger character.

Q.4. With which character does the author sympathise most?

- A.10. neither

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

11. Hard to say because although Ernest's point of view is presented, he is depicted as
 12. weak and dependent; Jane is seen as sensible and practical, but a bit harsh.

Q.5. In your opinion what is the cause of the problems between Ernest and Jane?

13. Ernest and Jane have not really got to know each other very well, though their
 14. story characters may have helped in some way. Ernest is dependent on the story
 15. for happiness and Jane is not.

Appendix Nine: Re-written Version of Lappin and Lapinova

Lappin and Lapinova

They were married. The wedding march pealed out. The pigeons fluttered. Small boys in Eton jackets threw rice; a fox terrier sauntered across the path; and Ernest led his bride to the car through that small inquisitive crowd of complete strangers which always collects in London to enjoy other people's happiness or unhappiness. Certainly he looked handsome and she looked shy. More rice was thrown, and the car moved off.

That was on Tuesday. Now it was Saturday. Ernest had still to get used to the fact that he was married to Jane. Perhaps he would never get used to the fact that he was married to anybody, he thought, as he sat in the bow window of the hotel looking over the lake to the mountains, and waited for his wife to come down to breakfast. Jane was a difficult name to get used to. It was not the name he would have chosen. He would have preferred Rosalind, Louisa or Francesca. She did not look like a Jane either. The name suggested the Albert Memorial, mahogany sideboards, steel engravings of the Prince Consort with his family - his mother-in-law's dining-room in porchester Terrace in short.

But here she was. Thank goodness she did not look like a Jane - no. But what did she look like? Well, when she was eating toast she looked like a rabbit. Not that anyone else would have seen a likeness to a creature so diminutive and timid in this spruce, athletic young woman with the straight nose, the blue eyes, and the very firm mouth. But that made it all the more amusing. Her nose twitched very slightly when she ate. So did his pet rabbit's. He kept watching her nose twitch and then he had to explain, when she caught him looking at her, why he laughed.

"It's because you're like a rabbit, Jane," he said. "Like a wild rabbit," he added, looking at her. "A hunting rabbit; a Queen rabbit; a rabbit that makes laws for all the other rabbits."

Jane had no objection to being that kind of rabbit, and since it amused him to see her twitch her nose - she had never known that her nose twitched - she twitched it on purpose. And he laughed and laughed; and she laughed too, so that the maiden ladies and the fishing man and the Swiss waiter in his greasy black jacket all guessed right; they were very happy. But how long does such happiness last? they asked themselves; and each answered according to his own circumstances.

At lunch time, seated on a clump of heather beside the lake, "Lettuce, rabbit?" said Ernest, holding out the lettuce that had been provided to eat with the hard-boiled eggs. "Come and take it out of my hand, " he added, and she stretched out and nibbled the lettuce and twitched her nose.

"Good rabbit, nice rabbit," he said, patting her, as he used to pat his tame rabbit at home. But that was absurd. She was not a tame rabbit what ever she was. He turned it into French. "Lapin", he called her. But whatever she was, she was not a French rabbit. She was simply and solely English. So he tried "Bunny" next; but that was worse. "Bunny" was someone plump and soft and comic; she was thin and hard and serious. Still, her nose twitched. "Lapinova," he exclaimed suddenly; and gave a little cry as if he had found the very word he looked for.

"Lapinova, Lapinova, Queen Lapinova" he repeated. It seemed to suit her exactly. Why? He did not know.

When there was nothing new to talk about on their long solitary walks - and it rained, as everyone had warned them that it would rain; or when they were sitting over

the fire in the evening, for it was cold, and the maiden ladies had gone and the fishing man, and the waiter only came if you rang the bell for him, he let his fancy play with the story of the Lapinova tribe. Under his hands - she was sewing; he was watching - they became very real, very vivid, very amusing. Jane put down her sewing and helped him. There were the black rabbits and the red; there were the enemy rabbits and the friendly. There were the wood in which they lived and the outlying prairies and the swamp. Above all there was Queen Lapinova, who, far from having only the one trick - that she twitched her nose - became as the days passed an animal of the greatest character; Ernest was always finding new qualities in her. But above all she was a great hunter.

"And what," said Ernest, on the last day of the honeymoon, "did the Queen do to-day?"

In fact, they had been climbing all day; and Jane had worn a blister on her heel; but Ernest did not mean that.

"To-day," said Jane, twitching her nose as she took a cigarette from the packet, "she chased a hare." she paused; struck a match, and twitched again.

"A male hare," she added.

"A white hare!" Ernest exclaimed, as if he had been expecting this. "Rather a small hare; silver grey; with big bright eyes?"

"Yes," said Jane, looking at him as he had looked at her, "a smallish animal; with eyes popping out of his head, and two little front paws dangling." It was exactly how he sat, with his paper dangling in his hands; and his eyes, that were so big and bright, were certainly a little prominent.

"Ah, Lappin," Ernest murmured.

"Is that what he's called?" said Jane - the real Ernest?" She looked at him. She felt very much in love with him.

"Yes; that's what he's called," said Ernest. "Lappin." And before they went to bed that night it was all settled. He was King Lappin; she was Queen Lapinova. They were the opposite of each other; she was bold and determined; he wary and undependable. She ruled over the busy world of rabbits; his world was a desolate, mysterious place, which he ranged mostly by moonlight. All the same, their territories touched; they were King and Queen.

Thus when they came back from their honeymoon they possessed a private world, inhabited, save for the one white hare, entirely by rabbits. No one guessed that there was such a place, and that of course made it all the more amusing. It made them feel, more even than most young married couples, in league together against the rest of the world. Often they looked slyly at each other when people talked about rabbits and woods and traps and shooting. Or they winked furtively across the table when Aunt Mary said that she could never bear to see a hare in a dish - it looked so like a baby: or when John, Jane's sporting brother, told them what price rabbits were fetching that autumn in Wiltshire, skins and all. Sometimes when they wanted a gamekeeper, or a poacher or a Lord of the Manor, they amused themselves by distributing the parts among their friends. Jane's mother, Mrs. Reginald Thorburn, for example, fitted the part of the squire to perfection. But it was all secret - that was the point of it; nobody save themselves knew that such a world existed.

Without that world, how, Ernest wondered, that winter could he have lived at all? For instance, there was the golden-wedding party, when all the Thorburns assembled at Porchester Terrace to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the union which had been so blessed - had it not produced Jane Thorburn? and so fruitful - had it

not produced nine other sons and daughters into the bargain, many themselves married and fruitful? He dreaded that party. But it was inevitable.

As he walked upstairs he felt bitterly that he was an only child and an orphan at that; a mere drop among all those Thorburns assembled in the great drawing room with the shiny satin wallpaper and the lustrous family portraits. The living Thorburns much resembled the painted; save instead of painted lips they had real lips; out of which came jokes; jokes about school rooms, and how they had pulled the chair from under the governess; jokes about frogs and how they had put them between the virgin sheets of maiden ladies. As for himself, he had never even made an apple-pie bed. Holding his present in his hand he advanced toward his mother-in-law sumptuous in yellow satin; and toward his father-in-law decorated with a rich yellow carnation. All round them on tables and chairs there were golden tributes, some nestling in cotton wool; others branching resplendent - candlesticks, hall-marked, authentic. But his present was only a little pinchbeck box pierced with holes; an old sand caster, an eighteenth-century relic, once used to sprinkle sand over wet ink. Rather a senseless present he felt - in an age of blotting paper; and as he proffered it, he saw in front of him the stubby black handwriting in which his mother-in-law when they were engaged had expressed the hope that "My daughter will make you happy." No, he was not happy. Not at all happy. He looked at Jane, straight as a ramrod with a nose like all the other noses in the family portraits; a nose that never twitched at all.

Then they went down to dinner. He was half-hidden by the great chrysanthemums that curled their red and gold petals into large tight balls. Everything was gold. A gold-edged card with gold initials intertwined recited the list of all the dishes that would be set one after another before them. He dipped his spoon in a plate of clear golden fluid. The raw white fog outside had been turned by the lamps into a golden mesh that blurred the edges of the plates and gave the pineapples a rough golden skin. Only he himself in his wedding suit peering ahead of him with his prominent eyes seemed insoluble as an icicle.

As the dinner wore on, however, the room grew steamy with heat. Beads of perspiration stood out on the men's foreheads. He felt that his icicle was being turned to water. He was being melted; dispersed; dissolved into nothingness; and would soon faint. Then through the surge in his head and the din in his ears he heard a woman's voice exclaim, "But they breed so!" Then John bawled:

"Little devils!...Shoot 'em! Jump on 'em with big boots! That's the only way to deal with 'em...rabbits!"

At that word, that magic word, he revived. Peeping between the chrysanthemums he saw Jane's nose twitch. It rippled, it ran with successive twitches. And at that a mysterious catastrophe befell the Thorburns. The golden table became a moor with the gorse in full bloom; the din of voices turned to one peal of lark's laughter ringing down from the sky. It was a blue sky - clouds passed slowly. And they had all been changed - the Thorburns. He looked at his father-in-law, a furtive little man with dyed moustaches. His foible was collecting things - seals, enamel boxes, trifles from eighteenth-century dressing tables which he hid from his wife. Now he saw him as he was - a poacher, stealing off with his coat bulging with pheasants and partridges to drop them stealthily into a three-legged pot in his smoky little cottage. That was his real father-in-law - a poacher. And Celia, the unmarried daughter, who always nosed out other people's secrets, the little things they wished to hide - she was a white ferret with pink eyes, and a nose clotted with earth from her horrid underground nosings and pokings. Slung round men's shoulders, in a net, and thrust down a hole - it was a pitiable life - Celia's; it was none of her fault. So he saw Celia. And then he looked at

his mother-in-law - whom they dubbed The Squire. Flushed, coarse, a bully - she was all that, as she stood returning thanks, but now that Ernest - that is Lappin - saw her, he saw behind her the decayed family mansion, the plaster peeling off the walls, and heard her, with a sob in her voice, giving thanks to her children (who hated her) for a world that had ceased to exist. There was a sudden silence. They all stood with their glasses raised; they all drank; then it was over.

"Oh, Queen Lapinova!" he cried as they went home together in the fog, "if your nose hadn't twitched just at that moment, I should have been trapped!"

"But you're safe," said Queen Lapinova, pressing his paw.

"Quite safe," he answered.

And they drove back through the Park, King and Queen of the marsh, of the mist, and of the gorse-scented moor.

Thus time passed; one year; two years of time. And on a winter's night, which happened by a coincidence to be the anniversary of the golden-wedding party - but Mrs. Reginald Thorburn was dead; the house was to let; and there was only a caretaker in residence - Ernest came home from the office. They had a nice little home; half a house above a saddler's shop in South Kensington, not far from the tube station. It was cold, with fog in the air, and Jane was sitting over the fire, sewing.

"What do you think happened to me to-day" he began as soon as he had settled himself down with his legs stretched to the blaze. "I was crossing the stream when-"

"What stream?" Jane interrupted him.

"The stream at the bottom, where our wood meets the black wood," he explained.

Jane looked completely blank for a moment.

"What on earth are you talking about?" she asked.

"My dear Jane!" he cried in dismay. "Queen Lapinova," he added, dangling his little front paws in the firelight. But her nose did not twitch. His hands - they turned to hands - clutched the newspaper he was holding; his eyes popped half out of his head. It took her five minutes at least to change from Jane to Queen Lapinova; and while he waited he felt a load on the back of his neck, as if somebody were about to wring it. At last she changed to Queen Lapinova; her nose twitched; and they spent the evening roaming the woods much as usual.

But he slept badly. In the middle of the night he woke, feeling as if something strange had happened to him. He was stiff and cold. At last he turned on the light and looked at Jane lying beside him. She was sound asleep. She snored. But even though she snored, her nose remained perfectly still. It looked as if it had never twitched at all. Was it possible that she was really Jane; and that he was really married to Jane? A vision of his mother-in-law's dining-room came before him; and there they sat, he and Jane, grown old, under the engravings, in front of the sideboard...It was their golden-wedding day. He could not bear it.

"Lapinova, Queen Lapinova!" he whispered, and for a moment her nose seemed to twitch of its own accord. But she still slept. "Wake up, Lapinova, wake up!" he cried.

Jane woke; and seeing him sitting bolt upright beside her she asked:

"What's the matter?"

"I thought my rabbit was dead!" he whimpered.

Jane was angry.

"Don't talk such rubbish, Ernest," she said "Lie down and go to sleep." She turned over. In another moment she was sound asleep and snoring.

But he could not sleep. He lay curled up on his side of the bed, like a hare in its form. He had turned out the light, but the street lamp lit the ceiling faintly, and the trees

outside made a shadowy grove on the ceiling in which he wandered, turning, twisting, in and out, round and round, hunting, being hunted, hearing the bay of hounds and horns; flying, escaping...until the maid drew the blinds and brought their early tea.

Next day he could settle to nothing. He seemed to have lost something. He felt as if his body had shrunk; it had grown small, and black and hard. His joints seemed stiff too, and when he looked in the glass, which he did several times as he wandered about the flat, his eyes seemed to burst out of his head, like currants in a bun. The rooms also seemed to have shrunk. Large pieces of furniture jutted out at odd angles and he found himself knocking against them. At last he put on his hat and went out. He walked along the Cromwell Road; and every room he passed and peered into seemed to be a dining-room where people sat eating under steel engravings, with thick yellow lace curtains, and mahogany sideboards. At last he reached the Natural History Museum; he used to like it when he was a child. But the first thing he saw when he went in was a stuffed hare standing on sham snow with pink glass eyes. Somehow it made him shiver all over. Perhaps it would be better when dusk fell. He went home and sat over the fire, without a light, and tried to imagine that he was out alone on a moor; and there was a stream rushing; and beyond the stream a dark wood. But he could get no further than the stream. At last he squatted down on the bank on the wet grass, and sat crouched in his chair, with his hands dangling empty, and his eyes glazed, like glass eyes, in the firelight. Then there was the crack of a gun...He started as if he had been shot. It was only Jane turning her key in the door. He waited, trembling. She came in and switched on the light. There she stood, tall, attractive, rubbing her hands that were red with cold.

"Sitting in the dark?" she said.

"Oh, Jane, Jane!" he cried, starting up in his chair.

"Well, what's up now?" she asked briskly, warming her hands at the fire.

"It's Lappin..." he faltered, glancing wildly at her out of his great startled eyes.

"He's gone, Jane. I've lost him!"

Jane frowned. She pressed her lips tight together.

"Oh that's what's up is it?" she said, smiling rather grimly at her husband. For ten seconds she stood there, silent; and he waited, feeling hands tightening at the back of his neck.

"Yes," she said at length, "Poor Lappin...". She tidied her hair at the looking-glass over the mantelpiece.

"Caught in a trap," she said, "killed," and sat down and began to sew.

So that was the end of that marriage.

UGLYPUSS



Joel hates November. As far as he's concerned they could drop it down the chute and he wouldn't complain. Drizzle and chill, everyone depressed, and then the winter to go through afterwards. The landlord has turned down the heat again, which means Joel has to either let his buns solidify and break off or use the electric heater, which means more money, because the electricity's extra. The landlord does this to spite him, Joel, personally. Just for that, Joel refuses to move. He tells other people he likes the building, which he does: it's a golden oldie, a mansion that's seen better days, with an arched entrance-way and stained glass. But also he won't give the old rent-gouger the satisfaction. Becka could handle him, when she was still living here. All she'd had to do was lean over the banister while the old bugger was standing below, and use her good voice, the furry one, and up went the temperature; a trick that's not possible for Joel.

He'd like to be someplace warm, but who can afford it? Too bad they made grants taxable, not that he's likely to get another one the ways things are going.

Things are not going too well. He's beginning to think street theatre should stay in California: up here you can only do it three months of the year, and some of that is too hot, they steam inside those outside masks. Even

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directing is no picnic. Last summer he got a sunburn, on the top of his head, where he's beginning to go bald. It was right after this that Becka caught him in the bathroom, standing with his back to the mirror, looking at his head from behind with a plastic violet-framed hand mirror, hers. She wouldn't let up on that for weeks. "Checked out your manly beauty this morning?" "Thought about Hair-Weeve?" "You'd look cute as a blonde. It would go with the skull." "Chest wigs yet?" "You could cut off some of your beard and glue it on the top, right?" Maybe he had it coming; he remembered getting onto her about spending twenty-five dollars at the hairdresser's once, soon after she'd moved in with him. It was her twenty-five dollars, but they were supposed to be sharing expenses. He'd called it an indulgence. She remembered that he remembered, of course. She has a memory like a rat-trap: full of rats.

Joel's fingers are cold. The apartment is like a football game in the rain. He puts down the black Bic ball-point with which he hasn't written anything for the past half hour, stretches, scratches his head. He recalls, for an instant and with irritation, the Italian calligraphy pen Becka affected for a while: an affectation that has gone the way of all the others. Then he turns back to square one.

The piece they're working on is for two weeks from now: the Crucifixion according to Solemate Sox, with management as Judas. They're going to do it right beside the picket lines, which will cheer the picketers up, or that was the general idea. Joel isn't too sure about this piece, and there's been a certain amount of debate about it within the group. The concept was Becka's: she justified it by saying they should pick symbolism the workers can tune into, and most of these workers are Portuguese, they'll know all about Judas, you only have to look at the statues on their lawns, all those bleeding plaster Jesuses and Virgin Marys with their creepy-looking babies. Though for the same reason some of the others felt that Christ

as a large knitted sock, in red and white stripes, might turn out to be too much for them. There could be a communications breakdown. Joel himself had been uneasy, but he'd voted on Becka's side, because they'd still been trying to work it out then and he knew what hell there would be to pay if he'd come out against her. Just another example, she would have said, of how he would never let her express herself.

He hopes it won't rain: if it does, the giant sock will get waterlogged, among other things. Maybe they should scrap it, try for another approach. Whatever they do, though, they'll probably have the assistant manager and the old boy himself coming outside and accusing them of anti-Semitism. This happens to Joel a lot; it's escalated after the piece on Lebanon and arms sales to South Africa they did outside the Beth Tzedec on Yom Kippur. Possibly the portable canvas mass grave, filled with baby dolls and splashed with red paint, had been going too far. A couple of the troupe members had wondered whether it was in bad taste, but Joel had said that bad taste was just an internalized establishment enforcer.

Joel doesn't believe in pulling punches. And if you punch, they punch back. It's getting so he can hardly go to parties any more. Though it's not all parties he should avoid, only certain kinds, the kinds where he will find his own second cousins and men he went to *shul* with, who are now dentists or have gone into business. Even before the Lebanon piece, they were none too polite. At the last party, a woman he didn't know at all, an older woman, came up to him and said, "Instead of shaking your hand I should kick you in the stomach."

"What for?" said Joel.

"You know what for," the woman said. "You've got a nerve. Eating our food. Better you should choke."

"Don't you think there should be an open discussion of the situation?" said Joel. "Like they do in Israel?"

"Goy's have no right," said the woman.

"So who's a goy?" said Joel.

"You," said the woman. "You're not a real Jew."

"All of a sudden you're some kind of self-appointed committee on racial purity?" said Joel. "Anyway, read the Torah. They used to stone the prophets."

"Shmuck," said the woman.

Joel tries not to let it get to him: he's got his credentials ready. You want murdered relatives? he'll tell them. I've got.

Then how can you betray them? they'll say. Spitting on the dead.

You think they'd agree with what's happening? he'll say. Two wrongs don't make a right.

Then there's a silence in him, because that's a thing no one will ever know.

Joel's head hurts. He gets up from his desk, sits down in the chair he thinks in, which is like the one at home that his father used to lie in to read the paper, a La-Z-Boy recliner, covered in black naugahyde. Joel bought his at least third-hand from the Goodwill, out of nostalgia and a wish for comfort, though Becka said he did it to affront her. She could never stand any of his furniture, especially the Ping-Pong table; she was always lobbying for a real dining-room table, though, as Joel would point out with great reasonableness, it wouldn't have a double function.

"You're always talking about bourgeoisie," she'd say, which wasn't true. "But that chair is the essence. Eau de bourgeoisie." She pronounced it in three syllables: *bour-jooi-se*. Maybe she did this on purpose, to get at him by mutilating the word, though the only time he'd corrected her (the *only* time, he's sure of that), she'd said, "Well, excuse me for living." Could he help it if he'd spent a year in Montreal? And she hadn't. He couldn't help any of the things that he had and she hadn't.

Early on, he thought they'd been engaging in a dialogue, out of which, sooner or later, a consensus would emerge. He thought they'd been involved in a process of mutual adjustment and counter-adjustment. But viewed from here and now, it was never a dialogue. It was merely a degrading squabble.

Joel decides not to brood any more about boring personal shit. There are more important things in the world. He picks up this morning's paper, from where it lies in segments on the floor, in which he knows he will read distorted and censored versions of some of them; but just as he's settling down to the purblind and moronic "Letters to the Editor" section, the phone rings. Joel hesitates before answering it: maybe it will be Becka, and he never knows which angle she'll be coming at him from. But curiosity wins, as it often does where Becka is concerned.

It isn't Becka though. "I'm going to cut your nuts off," says a male voice, almost sensuously, into his ear.

"To whom do you wish to speak?" says Joel, doing his best imitation of an English butler from a thirties film. Joel watches a lot of late movies.

This isn't the first phone call like this he's had. Sometimes they're anti-Semites, wanting to cut his Jewish nuts off; sometimes they're Jews, wanting to cut his nuts off because they don't think he's Jewish enough. In either case the message is the same: his nuts must go. Maybe he should introduce the two sides and they could cut each other's nuts off, that seems to be their shtick. He likes his where they are.

Joel's elocution throws the guy and he mumbles something about dirty Commie bastards. Joel tells him that Mr. Murgatroyd is not home at the moment; would he care to leave his name and number? The coward hangs up, and so does Joel. He's sweating all over. He didn't when this first started happening, but the ones at two A.M. have been getting to him.

Joel doesn't want to turn into one of those paranoids who live under the sofa every time there's a knock at the door. No Gestapo here, he tells himself. What he needs is some food. He goes out to the kitchen and rummages through the refrigerator, finding not much. Of the two of them, it was Becka who'd done most of the shopping. Without her, he's reverted to his old habits: pizza, Kentucky Fried, doughnuts from the Dunkin' Donuts. He knows it's unhealthy, but he indulges in unhealthy as a kind of perverse rebellion against her. He used to justify his tastes by saying that this was what the average worker eats, but he knew even at the time that he was using ideology to cover for addiction. He must be getting mided-aged though, because he's still taking the vitamin pills Becka used to foist on him, threatening him with beri-beri, constipation, and scurvy if he dodged. He recalls with some pain her roughage phase.

The truth is that even Becka's normal cooking, good though it was, made him nervous. He always felt he was in the wrong house, not his, since he'd never associated home with edible food. His mother had been such a terrible cook that he'd left the dinner table hungry more evenings than not. At midnight he would prow through his mother's apartment, stomach growing so loud you'd have thought it would wake her up, on bare criminal feet into the kitchen. Then followed the hunt for the only remotely digestible objects in the place, which were always baked goods from stores like Hunt's or Woman's Bakery, apple turnovers, muffins, cupcakes, cookies. She used to hide them on him, they'd never be in the refrigerator or the breadbox, not once she'd figured out that it was him who'd been eating them at night. Carefully, like a safe-cracker turning a sensitive combination lock, he'd dismantle the kitchen, moving one pot at a time, one stack of dishes. Sometimes she'd go so far as to stash them in the living room, once, even in the bathroom,

under the sink. That was stooping pretty low. He remembers the sense of challenge, the mounting excitement, the triumph when he would finally uncover those familiar sweet oily brown-paper bags with their tightly screwed tops and their odour, faintly stale. He has an image of himself, in his pyjamas, crouching beside the cache he's just dragged out from under the easy chair, cramming in the Chelsea buns, gloating. Next day she'd never mention it. Once or twice he failed, but only once or twice. She never mentioned that, either.

Now, prodding the shambles in his own refrigerator, Joel can't find anything to eat. There's half a pint of yoghurt, but it's left over from Becka and, by now, questionable. He decides to go out. He locates his jacket finally, which is in the nest of clothing at the bottom of the hall closet. Things somehow don't stay hung up when he hangs them. The jacket has *Bluejays* across the back and is raveling at the cuffs; it has grease on it from where he crawled under the car, years ago, trying to prove to someone or other that he knew why it was leaking, a futile exercise. The car had been completely irrational; there was never a plausible explanation for any of the things it did, any of the parts that fell off it. Joel felt that driving it was like thumbing your nose at the car establishment, at car snobbery, at the Platonic idea of cars, he refused to trade it in. This was the car that finally got stolen. "They were doing us all a favour," said Becka.

Becka once threatened to burn his *Bluejays* jacket. She said if he had to wear a stupid macho label, at least he could pick a winner, which goes to show how much she knows about it. Expos she could live with. By that time he'd started ignoring her, the text anyway, not the subtext. In so far as that was possible.

As he's doing up the zipper the phone rings. Joel thinks it may be another nut-cutter, he should get a telephone-answering machine, the kind you can listen in on. But

this time it really is Becka. The small sad voice tonight, the one he never trusts. She's more believable when she's being loud.

"H, Becka," he says, carefully neutral. "How are things going?" She was the one who walked out, though "walked" is too mild a description of it, so if there's conciliation to be done she can do it. "You want something?" he adds.

"Don't be like that," she says, after a short evaluating pause.

"Like what?" he says. "What am I being like that's so terrible?"

She sighs. He's familiar with these sighs of hers: she sighs over the phone better than any woman he's ever known. If he hadn't been sighed at by her so often, if he didn't know the hidden costs, he'd fall for it. She dodges his question, though, once she'd have met it head-on. "I thought maybe I could come over," she says. "So we could talk about it."

"Sure," says Joel, sliding into an old habit: he's never refused an offer to talk about it. But also he knows where talking about it leads. The pictures Becka's body, which she always holds back as the clincher, which is what he calls lush and she calls fat. Some of their first arguments were over this difference of opinion. "I'll be here," he says. If it's an offer, why turn it down?

But after he puts down the phone he regrets his easy acquiescence. So they go to bed. So what? What's it expected to prove? Is she working up to another move, back in? He's not sure he feels like going through the whole wash and spin cycle once again. Anyway, he's hungry. He types out a note writing would be too intimate saying he's been called out suddenly, to an important meeting, and he'll talk to her later. He doesn't say see. He opens the back door, which is the one she'll use, and tapes

the note to it, noticing as he does so that someone has thrown an egg at his door: the remains are oozing down the paintwork, partly solidified, the broken shell is on the sidewalk.

Joel goes back in, closes the door. It's dark out there. Someone has taken a lot of trouble, going around to the back like that, someone who knows exactly who lives behind his door. It wasn't just a random shot, someone who happened to be passing by with an egg in his hand and got a sudden urge to hurl it. He has choices: maybe it's one of the nut-slicers, an idea he doesn't relish. Maybe it's the landlord: that's what he thought last week, when he found a nail hammered through the back tire of his bicycle. He doesn't think it's anyone official. He's suspected the RCMP of bugging his phone, more than once, he knows that squeaky-clean sound on the line, and no doubt he's on their list, most people who do anything at all in this country are. But eggs they wouldn't bother with.

Or maybe it's Becka. Throwing an egg at his door, then phoning him to make up because she feels guilty about something she'll never confess to him she's done, that's her style. "What egg?" she'll say to him if he asks, making her innocent chipmunk eyes, and how will he ever know? Once, when they were at a party together, they heard a gossip story about a woman who'd recently split up with a man they both knew. She'd gone to the post office and filled out a change-of-address card in his name, redirecting all his mail to a town somewhere in the middle of Africa. At the time, and because he didn't like the guy much, Joel had found this hilarious. Becka hadn't, though she'd listened to the story more carefully than he had, and had asked questions. It strikes him now that she'd been filing it away for future reference. Now he tries to remember the rest of the story, the other things the woman had done: *intercepting the man's shirts on the way back*

from the laundry and cutting off all the buttons, sending funeral wreaths to his new girl friend. Joel is safe on both counts: no laundered shirts, no new girl friend. It's just the mail he'll have to watch.

Now he's wondering whether going out is such a good idea. Becka still has a key, which he'll have to do something about pretty soon. Maybe she'll be in his apartment, waiting for him, when he gets back. He decides to take his chances. When she finds he isn't there, she can stay or she can go, it's up to her. (Leaving it up to her has always been one of his best tactics. It drives her mad.) Either way, he's made his move. He's shown her he's not eager. Any effort put out this time around is going to be hers.

As he searches for his wallet in the jumble of paperbacks, papers, and socks beside the bed, Uglypuss brushes against his legs, purring. He scratches her between the ears and pulls her up slowly by the tail, which he's convinced cats like. ("Cut that out, you'll break its spine," Becka would protest. But Uglypuss was his goddamn cat, to begin with.)

"Uglypuss," he says. He's had her almost as long as he's had his La-Z-Boy recliner and his Ping-Pong table: she's been through a lot with him. She turns her odd face up at him, half orange, half black, divided down the nose, a Yin and Yang cat, as Becka used to say during her organic-cereal and body-mind-energy phase.

She follows him to the door, the front one this time; he'll leave through the communal vestibule, walk down the steps, where there are street lights. She meows, but he doesn't want her going out, not at night. Even though she's spayed, she wanders, and sometimes gets into fights. Maybe the toms can't tell she's a girl, or maybe they think she is, but she disagrees. He used to make pointed analyses of Uglypuss's sexual hang-ups, to Becka, over breakfast. Whatever the reason, she gets herself messed up: her

cars are nicked, and he's had it with the antibiotic ointment, which she licks off anyway. He thinks of distracting her with food, but he's out of cat kibble, which is one more reason for going out. He takes the container of dubious yoghurt out of the refrigerator and leaves it on the floor, opened for her.

. . .

Joel wipes his mouth, pushes the plate away. He's stuffed down everything: Weiner schnitzel, home fries, the lot. Now he's full and lazy. The back room of the Blue Danube used to be one of his favourite places to eat, before he moved in with Becka, or rather, she moved in with him. It's inexpensive and you get a lot for your money, good quality too. It has another advantage: other people who want cheap food come here, art students, in pairs or singly, out-of-work actors or actresses, those on the prowl but not desperate or rich or impervious enough to go to singles bars. Joel wouldn't want to pick up the kind of girl who would go to singles bars.

Becka never liked this place, so he gradually eased out of the habit of coming here. The last time they ate together it was here, though: a sure sign, for both of them, that the tide had turned.

Becka had come back from the washroom and plunked herself down opposite him, as though she'd just made an earth-shattering discovery. "Guess what's written in the women's can?" she'd asked.

"I'll bite," said Joel.

"Women make love. Men make war," she said.

"So?" Joel said. "Is the lipstick pink or red?"

"So it's true."

"That's supposed to be an insight!" said Joel. "It's not men that make war. It's some men. You think those young working-class guys want to march off and be slaughtered? It's the generals, it's the . . ."

"But it's not women, is it?" said Becka.

"That's got nothing to do with anything," Joel said, exasperated.

"That's what I mean about you," said Becka. "It's only your goddamned point of view that's valid, right?"

"Bullshit," he said. "We aren't talking about points of view. We're talking about *history*."

As he said this, the futility of what he was trying to do swept over him, as it sometimes does: what's the point of continuing, in a society like this one, where it's always two steps forward and two back? The frustration, the lack of money, the indifference, and on top of that the incessant puerile bickering on the left over who's more pure. If there was a real fight (he thinks "guns" but not "war"), if it was out in the open, things would be clearer, but this too can be seen as a temptation, the impulse to romanticize other people's struggles. It's hard to decide what form of action is valid. Do you have to be dead to be authentic, as the purists seem to believe? Though he hasn't noticed any of them actually lining up for the firing squads. Maybe he's chosen the wrong mode, maybe street theatre doesn't fit in up here, where the streets are so neat and clean and nobody lives on them, in shacks or storm sewers or laid out on mats along the sidewalks. Sometimes he thinks maybe they're all just play-acting, indulging in a game of adult dress-up that accomplishes nothing in the end.

But these moods of his seldom last long. "Wars are fought so those in power can stay there," he said to Becka, trying to be patient.

"You don't think you're ever going to win, do you?" Becka said softly. She can read his mind, but only at bad times.

"It's not about winning," Joel said. "I know whose side I'd rather be on, that's all."

"How about being on mine?" Becka said. "For a change."

"What the shit are you talking about?" said Joel. "I'm not hungry," said Becka. "Let's go home."

It's the word *home* that echoes in the air here for Joel now, plaintively, in a minor key. Home isn't a place, Becka said once, it's a feeling. Maybe that's what's the matter with it, Joel answered. For him, when he was growing up, home was the absence of a thing that should have been there. Going home was going into nothingness. He'd rather be out.

He looks around the room, which is smoke-filled, bare-walled, his gaze passing over couples, resting longer on women by themselves. Why not admit it? He's come out tonight because he's looking for it, as so many times before: someone to go home with, to her home, not his, in the hope that this unknown place, yet another unknown place, will finally contain something he wants to have. It's Becka's phone call that's done it: she has that effect on him. Every move to encircle him, pin him down, force him into a corner, only makes him more desperate to escape. She never came right out and said so, but what she wanted was permanence, commitment, monogamy, the works. Forty years of the same thing night after night was a long time to contemplate.

He sees a girl he knows slightly, remembers from the summer, when they were doing the Cannibal Monster Tomato play down near Leanington, for the itinerant harvesters. (Cold-water shacks. Insecticides in the lungs. No medical protection. Intimidation. It was a good piece.) The girl was a minor player, someone who carried a sign. As he recalls, she was getting laid by one of the troupe, that was the only explanation he could think of at the time for her presence among them. He hopes he was right, he hopes she's not too political. Becka wasn't political when he first met her. In those days she was doing art therapy at one of the nuthouses, helping the loonies to express themselves with wet newspaper and glue. She'd

had a calmness, a patience that he's since realized was only a professional veneer, but at the time he'd settled into it like a hammock. He'd enjoyed trying to educate her, and she'd gotten into it to parrot him or please him. What a mistake.

In recent years, he's come to realize that the kind of women that ought to turn him on—left-leaning intellectual women who can hold up their end of a debate, who believe in fifty-fifty, who can be good pals—aren't the kind that actually do. He's not ashamed of this discovery, as he would have been once. He prefers women who are soft-spoken and who don't live all the time in their heads, who don't take everything with deadly seriousness. What he needs is someone who won't argue about whether he's too macho, whether he should or shouldn't encourage the capitalists by using under-arm deodorant, whether the personal is political or the political is personal, whether he's anti-Semitic, anti-female, anti-anything. Someone who won't argue.

He pushes back his chair and walks over, ready for rejection. They can always tell him to go away. He doesn't mind that much, he never tries to force the issue. There's no sense in being obnoxious, and he doesn't want to be with anyone who doesn't want to be with him. He's never seen the point of rape.

This girl has reddish hair, parted in the middle and drawn back. She's crouched over her noodles, pretending to be absorbed in a large but paperbacked book that's propped open beside her plate. Joel goes through the openers: "Hi, good to see you again. Mind if I join you?"

She glances up, with that little frown he's seen on their faces so often, that coming-out-of-the-trance face, *Oh, you startled me*, as if she hasn't been aware of his approach. She's been aware. She recognizes him, hesitates, deciding, then she smiles. She's grateful, he sees, for the company: it must be all over with what's-his-name. Re-

lieved, he sits down. Even though he knows no one is really watching him, it still makes him feel like an idiot to be sent away, like a puppy that's made a mess.

Now for the book: that's always a good way in. He turns it so he can see the title. *Quilt-Making Through History*. That's a hard one: he knows nothing and cares less about quilt-making. He guesses that she's the kind of girl who would read about it but would never actually do it, though opening up with a statement to this effect would be far too aggressive. It's a mistake to begin by putting them down.

"Like a beer," he says, "or are you a vegetarian?"

"As a matter of fact I am," she says, with that superior tight mini-smile they give you. She hasn't got the joke. Joel sighs; they're off to a roaring start.

"Then I guess you mind if I smoke?" he says.

She relents; evidently she doesn't want to drive him away. "You go ahead," she says. "It's a big room." She doesn't add that it's full of smoke already, and he likes her better.

He thinks of saying, "Live around here?" but he can't, not again. "Tell me about yourself" is out too. Instead he finds himself shifting almost immediately, much sooner than he usually does, into social realism. "This day has been total shit," he says. He feels this, it's not fake, the day *has* been total shit, but on another level he knows he wants sympathy, and on yet another one he's aware it's a useful ploy: if they feel sorry for you, how can they turn you down?

Becka used to accuse him of having a detachable prick. In her version, he unscrewed it, put it on a leash, and took it out for walks, like a dachshund without legs or a kind of truffle-hunting pig (her metaphor). According to her, it would stick itself into any hole or crevice it could find, anything vaguely funnel-shaped, remotely female. In her more surrealistic inventions (when she was still

trying to live with what she called this habit of his, before she switched to *compulsion*, when she was still trying to be humorous about it), he'd find himself stuck somewhere, in a mouse-hole or a dead tree or an outside faucet, unable to get loose, because his prick had made a mistake. What could you expect, she said, from a primitive animal with no eyes?

"If I got you a sheep and a pair of rubber boots, would you stay home more?" she said. "We could keep it in the garage. If we had a garage. If it wasn't too boor-joo-ice to have a garage."

But she was wrong, it isn't the sex he's after. It isn't only the sex. Sometimes he thinks, in the middle of it, that really he'd rather be jogging around the block or watching a movie or playing Ping-Pong. Sex is merely a social preliminary, the way a handshake used to be, it's the first step in getting to know someone. Once it's out of the way, you can concentrate on the real things; though without it, somehow you can't. He likes women, he likes just talking with them sometimes. The ones he likes talking with, having a laugh with, these are the ones that become what he refers to privately as "repeaters."

"How come I'm not enough for you?" Becka said, soon after the first two or three, when she'd figured it out. He wasn't a very good liar, he resented having to conceal things.

"It's not important," he said, trying to comfort her, she was crying. He still loved her in a simple way then. "It's no more important than sneezing. It's not an emotional commitment. You're an emotional commitment."

"If it's not important, why do you do it?" she said. He wasn't able to answer that. "This is just the way I am," he said finally. "It's part of me. Can't you accept it?"

"But this is just the way I am," she said, crying even more. "You make me feel like nothing. You make me

feel I'm worth nothing to you. I'm not even worth any more than a sneeze."

"That's blackmail," he said, pulling away. He couldn't stand to have love and fidelity extracted from him, like orange juice or teeth. No squeezers. No pliers. She should have known she was the central relationship: he'd told her often enough.

This girl's name, which he's forgotten but which he digs out of her by pretending to almost remember it, is Amelia. She works, of course, in a bookstore. Looking more closely, he can see she's not quite as young as he first thought. There are tiny shrivellings beginning around her eyes, a line forming from the nostril to the corner of her mouth, later it will extend down to her chin, which is small and pointed, and she will develop that peevish, starved look. Redheads have delicate skin, they age early. She has a chain around her neck, with a glass pendant on it containing dried flowers. He guesses she'll be the kind of girl who has prisms hanging in her window and a poster of a whale over the bed, and when they get to her place, she does.

Amelia turns out to be one of the vocal kind, which he likes: it's a tribute, in a way. He's surprised, too: you couldn't have told it by looking at her, that almost prissy restraint and decorum, the way she tightened her little bum, moved it away when he put his hand on it as she was unlocking the door. Joel doesn't know why he always expects girls with pierced ears and miniature gold stars in them, high cheekbones and frail rib cages, to be quiet in bed. It's some antiquated notion he has about good taste, though he should know by now that the thin ones have more nerve-endings per square inch.

Afterwards she goes back to being subdued, as if she's faintly ashamed of herself for those groans, for having

clutched him like that, as if he's not a semi-stranger after all. He wonders how many times she's gone home with someone she barely knows, he's curious, he'd like to ask, "You do this often?" But he knows from past experience they're likely to find this insulting, some kind of obscure slur on their moral standards, even if, like himself, they do. Sometimes, especially when they're younger, he feels he ought to tell them they shouldn't behave like this. Not all men are good risks, even the ones who eat at the Blue Danube. They could be violent, into whips or safety pins, perverts, murderers, not like him. But any interference from him could be interpreted as patriarchal paternalism: he knows that from experience too. It's their own lookout; anyway, why should he complain?

Amelia lies against him, head on his biceps, red hair spilling across his arm, her mouth relaxed, he's grateful for her simple physical presence, the animal warmth. Women don't like the term "muff," he knows that, but for him it's both descriptive and affectionate: something furry that keeps you warm. This is the kind of thing he needs to get him through November. She's even being friendly, in a detached sort of way. He can't always depend on them to be friendly afterwards. They've been known to hold it against him, as if it's something he's done all by himself, to them instead of with them; as if they've had nothing to do with it.

He likes this one well enough to suggest that maybe they could watch the late show on TV, which isn't an experience he'd want to share with just anyone. Sex yes, late movies no. He wonders if she's got any food in the house, some cake maybe, which they could eat right off the plate while watching, licking the icing from each other's fingers. He's hungry again, but more than that, he wants the

feeling of comfort this would bring. There's something about lemon icing in a dark room. But when she says without any underones that, no, she'd like some sleep, she needs to get up early to go to her fitness class before work, that's all right with him too. He puts on his clothes, lighthearted, this whole thing has cheered him up a lot. He has that secret feeling of having gotten away with it again, in the bedroom window and out again without being caught: no sticky flypaper here. He remembers, briefly, the day he figured out his mother was hiding the cookies, not so he wouldn't find them, but so he would, and how enraged, how betrayed he'd been. He'd seen the edge of her green chenille bathrobe whisking back around the corner, she'd been standing in the hall outside the kitchen, listening to him eat. She must have known what a rotten cook she was, and this was her backhanded way of making sure he got at least some food into him. That's what he thinks now, but at the time he merely felt he'd been controlled, manipulated by her all along. Maybe that was when he started to have his first doubts about free will.

Amelia has turned on her side and is almost asleep. He kisses her, says he'll let himself out. He wonders if he likes her well enough to see her again, decides he probably doesn't. Nevertheless he makes a note of her phone number, memorizing it off the bedside phone; he'll jot it down later, out in the kitchen, where she won't notice. He never knows when a thing like that will come in handy. Any port in a storm, and when he's at a low point, a trough in the graph, he needs to be with someone and it doesn't much matter who, within limits.

He pisses into her toilet, flushes it, noting the anti-nuke sticker on the mirror, the pots of herbs struggling for existence on the windowsill. Then he goes into the kitchenette and turns on the light, taking a quick peek

into the refrigerator in passing, on the off-chance she's got something unhealthy and delicious in there. But she's a tofu girl, and reluctantly he's out the door.

He's not thinking about Becka. He doesn't remember her till his key's in the lock, when he has a sudden image of her, waiting on the other side, black hair falling around her face like something in a Lorca play, large wounded eyes regarding him, some deadly instrument in her hand: a corkscrew, a potato peeler, or, more historically, an ice-pick, though he doesn't own one. Cautiously he opens the door, eases through, is relieved when nothing happens. Maybe it's finally over, after all. It occurs to him that he's forgotten to buy cat food.

His relief lasts until he hits the living room. She's been here, all right. He gazes at the innards of his La-Z-Boy, strewn across the floor, its wiry guts protruding from what's left of the frame, at the hunks of soft foam from the sofa washing against the fireplace as if it's a shore, as if Becka has been a storm, a hurricane. In another corner he finds all his Ping-Pong balls, lined up in a row and stomped on; they look like hatched-out turtle eggs. Some of his underwear is lying in the fireplace, charred around the edges, still smouldering.

He shrugs. Histrionic bitch, he thinks. So he'll replace it: there's nothing here that can't be duplicated. She won't get to him that easily. She hasn't touched the typewriter, though: she knows exactly how far she can go.

Then he sees the note. *Want Uglypuss back? It's in a garbage can. Start looking.* The note is pinned to the big orange art-shop candle on the mantelpiece, one of the first things she gave him. It's as if he's finally had a visit from Santa Claus, who has turned out to be the monster his mother was always warning him against when he showed symptoms of wanting a Christmas like some of the other kids on the block. *Santa Claus brings you lumps of coal and rotten potatoes. What do you need it for?*

But this was no Santa Claus, it was Becka, who knows just where to slide in the knife. Dead or alive, she doesn't say. She's never exactly loved Uglypuss, but surely she wouldn't murder. He fears the worst, but he can't assume it. He'll have to go and see. He hears the claws scrabbling on metal, the plaintive wails, the mounting panic, as he does up his zipper again. Finally he knows she'll stop at nothing.

He walks in a widening circle through the streets around his house, opening every can, digging through the bags, listening for faint meows. He shouldn't be spending time on something this trivial, this personal, he should be conserving his energy for the important things. What he needs is perspective. This is Becka controlling him again. Maybe she was lying, maybe Uglypuss is safe and sound at her new place, purring beside the hot-air register. Maybe Becka is making him go through all this for nothing, hoping he'll arrive on her doorstep and she can torture him or reward him, whichever she feels like at the moment.

"Uglypuss!" he calls. He tells himself he's in a state of shock, it will hit him tomorrow, when the full implications of a future without Uglypuss will sink in. At the moment though he's thinking: *Why did I have to give it that dumb name?*

* * *

Becka walks along the street. She has often walked along this particular street. She tells herself there is nothing unusual about it.

Both of her hands are bare, and there's blood on the right one and four thin lines of it across her cheek. In her right hand she's carrying an axe. Actually it's smaller than an axe, it's a hatchet, the one Joel keeps beside the fireplace to split the kindling when he lights the fire. Once she liked to make love with him on the rug in front of

the fireplace, in the orange glow from the candle. That was until he said there was always a draft and he'd rather be in bed, where it was warmer. After a while she figured out that he didn't really like being looked at; he had an odd sort of modesty, as if he felt his body belonged to him alone. Once she tried flattering him about it, but this was a bad move, you weren't supposed to compare. So then it was under the covers, like a married couple. Before that she used to bug him about keeping the axe in the living room, she wanted him to leave it on the back porch and split the kindling out there instead, she told him she didn't like getting splinters.

It was looking at the axe that finally did it. Joel was gone when he said he'd be there. She didn't know exactly where he'd gone but she knew in general. He was always doing that to her. She waited for an hour and a half, pacing, reading his magazines, surrounded by a space that used to be hers and still felt like it. The heat was off, which meant Joel had been antagonizing the landlord again. She thought about lighting a fire. Uglypuss came and rubbed against her legs and complained, and when she went into the kitchen to put out some food, there was the yoghurt she'd bought herself, opened on the floor.

She asked herself how long she was going to wait. Even if he came back soon, he'd have that smug look and the smell of it still on him. She'd have the choice of ignoring it, in which case he won, or saying something, in which case he won also, because then he could accuse her of intruding on his privacy. It would be just another example, he'd say, of why things couldn't work out. That would make her angry—they could, they could work out if he'd only try—and then he would criticize her for being angry. Her anger would be a demonstration of the power he still holds over her. She knows it, but she can't control it. This time was once too often. It was always once too often.

Becka walks quickly, head a little down and forward, as if she has to push to make her way through the air. Her hair blows back in the wind. It's beginning to drizzle. In her left hand she's carrying a green plastic garbage bag, screwed shut and knotted at the top. The street she's on is Spadina, a street she remembers from childhood as the place where she would be taken by her grandfather when he wanted to pay visits to some of his old cronies. She'd be shown off by him, and given things to eat. That was before the Chinese mostly took over. It's well enough lighted, even at this time of night, bamboo furniture, wholesale clothing, restaurants, ethnic as they say, but she's not buying or eating, she's just looking, thanks, for a garbage can, someplace to dump the bag. An ordinary garbage can is all she asks, why can't she find one?

She can't believe she's done what she's just done. What horrifies her is that she enjoyed it, the axe biting into the black Naugahyde of that ratty chair of his, into the sofa, the stuffing she'd pulled out and thrown around, it might as well have been Joel. Though if he'd been there he would have stopped her. Just by being there, by looking at her as if to say, *You mean you really can't think of anything more important to do?*

This is what he's turned me into, she thinks. I was never this mean before, I used to be a nice person, a nice girl. Didn't I?

Today, before calling him, she'd been sick of the taste of the inside of her own mouth. She'd had enough of solitude, enough freedom. A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle. Brave words, she'd said them once herself. That was before she figured out she wasn't a fish. Today she thought she still loved him, and love conquers all, doesn't it? Where there's love there's hope. Maybe they could get it back, together. Now, she doesn't know.

She thinks about stuffing the garbage bag into a mail-

box, the parcel kind, or a newspaper stand. She could put in the quarter, open the box, take out the newspaper, leave the bag. Someone would find it quicker that way. She is not heartless.

But suddenly there's a garbage can, not a plastic one but old-style metal, in front of a Chinese fruit-and-vegetable store. She goes over to it, leans the hatchet against it, sets down the bag, tries to lift the lid. Either it's stuck or her hands are numb. She bangs it against a telephone pole, several people look at her. At last the lid comes loose. Luckily the can is half empty. She drops the bag in. Not a sound: she sprayed in some boot water-proofer, which was about the only thing she could think of: breathing the fumes makes you dizzy. Kids at high school used to get high on it. The stupid cat clawed its way through the first two garbage bags, before she thought of tying it up in one of Joel's shirts and spraying it with boot water-proofer to quiet it down. She doesn't know if it went unconscious, maybe it just couldn't get through Joel's shirt and decided not to fight a losing battle. Maybe it's catatonic. To coin a phrase. She hopes she hasn't killed it. She pokes the bag a little: there's a wiggle. She's relieved, but she doesn't relent and let it loose. Why should she have all the grief? Let him have some, for a change.

This is what will really get to him, she knows: this theft. His kidnapped child, the one he wouldn't let her have. *We're not ready yet* and all that crap. Crap! He'd always thought more of the cat than he did of her. It used to make her sick, to watch the way he'd pick it up by the tail and run it through his hands, like sand, and the cat loved it, like the nauseating masochist it was. It was the kind of cat that drooled when you stroked it. It fawned all over him. Maybe the real reason she couldn't stand it was that it was a grotesque and stunted furry little parody of herself. Maybe this was what she looked like, to other people, when she was with him. Maybe this was what

she looked like to him. She thinks of herself lying with her eyes closed and her mouth slack and open. Did he remember what she looked like at those moments, when he was with others?

She doesn't close the lid on the garbage can. She leaves the hatchet where it is, walks away. She feels smaller, diminished, as if something's been sucking on her neck. Anger is supposed to be liberating, so goes the mythology, but her anger has not freed her in any way that she can see. It's only made her emptier, flowing out of her like this. She doesn't want to be angry; she wants to be comforted. She wants a truce.

She can remember, just barely, having had confidence in herself. She can't recall where she got it from. Go through life with your mouth open, that used to be her motto. Live in the now. Encounter experience fully. Hold out your arms in welcome. She once thought she could handle anything.

Tonight she feels dingy, old. Soon she will start getting into the firming cream, she will start worrying about her eyelids. Beginning again is supposed to be exciting, a challenge. Beginning again is fine as an idea, but what with? She's used it all up, she's used up.

Still, she would like to be able to love someone, she would like to feel inhabited again. This time she wouldn't be so picky, she'd settle for a man maybe a little worn around the edges, a second, with a few hairline cracks, a few pulled threads, something from a fire sale, someone a little damaged. Like those ads for adoptable children in the *Star*: "Today's Child." Today's lover. A man in a state of shock, a battered male. She'd take a divorced one, an older one, someone who could only get it up for kinky sex, anything, as long as he'd be grateful. That's what she wants, when it comes right down to it: a gratitude equal to her own. But even in this she's deluding herself. Why should such a man be any different from the rest? They're

all a little damaged. Anyway, she'd be clutching at a straw, and who wants to be a straw?

She should never have called him. She should know by now that over is over, that when it says *The End* at the end of a book it means there isn't any more, which she can never quite believe. The problem is that she's invested so much suffering in him, and she can't shake the notion that so much suffering has to be worth something. Maybe unhappiness is a drug, like any other: you could develop a tolerance to it, and then you'd want more.

People came to the end of what they had to say to one another, Joel told her once, during one of their many sessions about whether they should stay together or not; the time he was trying for wisdom. After that point, he said, it was only repetition. But Becka protested, Becka hadn't come to the end of what she had to say, or so she thought. That was the trouble: she never came to the end of what she had to say. He'd push her too far and she'd blurt things out, things she couldn't retrieve, she would make clumsy mistakes of a kind she never made with other people, the landlord for instance, with whom she was a miracle of tact. But with Joel, the irrevocable is always happening.

He once told her he wanted to share his life with her. He said he'd never asked anyone that before. How she melted over that, how she lapped it up! But he never said he wanted her to share her life with him, which, when it happened, turned out to be a very different thing.

What now, now that she's done it? Time will go on. She'll walk back to the row house in Cabbagetown she shares with two other women. This is about all she can afford, at least she has her own room. She hardly ever sees the other two women; she knows them mostly by their smells, burnt toast in the mornings, incense (from one of them, the one with the lay-over-boy friend) at night. The situation reeks of impermanence. She got the place

by answering an ad in the paper, *Third woman needed, share kitchen, no drugs or freaks*, after moving out of the apartment she still thinks of as her own, and after a miserable week with her mother, who thought but did not say that it served her right for not insisting on marriage. What did she expect anyway, from a man like that? Not a real job. Not a real Jew. Not real.

When she gets to the house she'll be worn out, her adrenalin high gone, replaced by a flat grey fatigue. She'll put on her most penitential nightgown, blue-flowered flannelette, the one Joel hates because it reminds him of landladies. She'll fix herself a hot-water bottle and climb into a bed which does not yet smell like hers and feel sorry for herself. Maybe she should go out hunting, sit in a bar, something she's never done, though there's always a first time. But she needs her sleep. Tomorrow she has to go to work, at her new job, her old job, mixing poster paints for the emotionally disturbed, a category that right now includes her. It doesn't pay well and there are hazards, but these days she's lucky to have it.

She couldn't stay with the troupe, even though she'd done such a good job of the headless corpses for the El Salvador piece in the spring, even though it was her who'd come up with Christ as a knitted sock. It would be disruptive for the troupe, they both agreed on that, to have her there; the tension, the uneven balance of conflicting egos. Or words to that effect. He was so good at that bullshit, the end result of which was that she'd been out of a job and he hadn't, and for a while she'd even felt noble about it.

Becka's four blocks away from the garbage can now, and it's raining in earnest. She stands under an awning, waiting for the rain to slow down, trying to decide whether or not to give in and take the streetcar. She wants to walk all the way back, to get rid of this furious energy.

It's time for Joel to be coming home. She pictures him

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opening the door, throwing his jacket on the floor, she sees what he will find. Now she feels as if she's committed a sacrilege. Why should she feel that way? Because for at least two years she thought he was God.

He isn't God. She can see him, in his oily Bluejays jacket, running through the streets, panting because he'll be out of breath, he'll have eaten too much for dinner, with whatever slut he'd picked up, plunging his hands into chilly garbage, calling like a fool: *Uglypuss!* People will think he's crazy. But he will only be mad with grief.

Like her, leaning her forehead against the cold shop window, staring through the dark glass, yellowed by those plastic things they put there to keep the sun from fading the colours, at the fur-coated woman inside, tears oozing down her cheeks. She can't even remember now which garbage can she put the damn thing in, she couldn't find it again if she looked. She should have taken it home with her. It was her cat too, more or less, once. It purred and drooled for her, too. It kept her company. How could she have done that to it? Maybe the boot spray will make it feeble-minded. That's all he'll need, a feeble-minded cat. Not that anyone will be able to tell the difference.

In her either, if she goes on like this. She wipes her nose and eyes on her damp sleeve, straightens. When she gets home she'll do some Yogic breathing and concentrate on the void for a while, trying once more for serenity, and take a bath. *My heart does not bleed*, she tells herself. But it does.

TWO STORIES ABOUT EMMA

THE WHIRLPOOL RAPIDS

There are some women who seem to be born without fear, just as there are people who are born without the ability to feel pain. The painless ones go around putting their hands on hot stoves, freezing their feet to the point of gangrene, scalding the linings of their throats with boiling coffee, because there is no warning anguish. Evolution does not favour them. So too perhaps with the fearless women, because there aren't very many of them around. I myself have known only two. One was a maker of television documentaries and was one of the first to shoot footage in Vietnam. There would be the beach, they said, and the line of jungle, with the soldiers advancing towards it, and in front of them, walking backwards, would be this woman. Providence appears to protect such women, maybe out of astonishment. Or else, sooner or later, it doesn't.

I'm told the fearlessness goes away when these women have babies. Then they become cowards, like the rest of us. If the baby is threatened they become ferocious, of course, but that is not out of the ordinary.

The other woman I knew, and still know—her luck has held—is Emma, who has always intrigued me. I think of

Appendix Eleven; Comparative Study, Questionnaire

Part One

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

I am going to ask you to read a short story and then to answer questions about your response to the story. I am interested in the fact that readers can read the same story yet sometimes arrive at different interpretations. The questions which follow are an attempt to investigate what factors influence people in their reading.

The story concerns the relationship between a man and woman, Joel and Becka. I would like to know what the story means to you, and how you may have arrived at this meaning. Your interpretation may not be the same as that of any other reader, and there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers.

In order for me to have some general background information, please answer the following questions by ticking the relevant boxes.

Sex	Male	Female
	[]	[]

Age	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 65
	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Education	Secondary	Further	Higher	Other (Please Specify)
	[]	[]	[]	[]

Status	Single	Partner	Married	Divorced	Other
	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }

Nationality

First Language

Occupation

Have you studied literature as part of a course?	Yes	No
	[]	[]

If yes please specify

Please indicate below any writers or kinds of writing that particularly interest you.

Which writers or kinds of writing have you read most of in the past two years?

Do you read literature for pleasure?	often	sometimes	never
	[]	[]	[]

Do you read literature for study/ work purposes?	[]	[]	[]
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Do you read theoretical works about literature for pleasure? (e.g. literary theory, literary criticism, stylistics)	[]	[]	[]
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Do you read theoretical works about Literature for study/work purposes?	[]	[]	[]
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Please use the space below if you wish to add any further comments about your reading habits.

Part Two

Please read the story now.

Read the story as you would do normally. You can read it as often as you wish, and return to it if required when completing the questionnaire.

Sometimes you will be asked to tick the relevant boxes. At other times you will be asked to give reasons for your answer. Remember this is not a test of whether your answer is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. I am only interested in your personal response.

1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

2. Did you enjoy reading it?

Very much	quite a lot	ok	not much	not at all
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Please try to give reasons for your answer

3. How would you describe Joel?

4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

Very sympathetic	fairly sympathetic	no opinion	fairly unsympathetic	totally unsympathetic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please try to give reasons for your answer

Use a red pen to underline any part(s) of the story which help to explain your answer

5. How would you describe Becka?

6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

Very sympathetic	fairly sympathetic	no opinion	fairly unsympathetic	totally unsympathetic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please try to give reasons for your answer

Use a blue pen to underline any parts of the story which help to explain your answer

7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

Joel	Mostly Joel	Both Equally	Mostly Becka	Becka	Neither
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Please try to give reasons for your answer

8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

8. Please try to give reasons for your answer

Please tick the relevant box to indicate whether you would prefer at a later date to either

a) discuss your responses individually with the researcher ☐

b) take part in a discussion group ☐

Please provide your name and telephone number below

Thankyou very much for taking the time to complete the questionnaire

Appendix Twelve: Participant Profiles, Comparative Study

Participant	Age group	Education	Literature (Training)	Literature (Pleasure)	Status	Occupation
Am	26-35	Higher	'A' level English literature	Horror, science fiction, thriller, suspense, spy	Single	unemployed
1f	26-35	Higher	Degree in French and Italian Literature, Ph.D Italian Literature	All types of literature	Married	lecturer
2f	46-55	Higher	Degree in Literature	Classics Trollope David Lodge	Married	Lecturer
3f	26-35	Higher	Degree in English and Linguistics	Contemporary American and British fiction Fractured and gendered narrative structures	Single	student
4f	26-35	Higher	Not specified	Drama Language and Literature	Single	teacher
5f	46-55	Higher	Degree in English	Atwood, Shields, Tony Harrison, Sheamus Heaney	Married	
6m	36-45	Higher	Degree in English, M.A. Stylistics	Not specified	Single	
7f	26-35	Higher	Degree in English	Traditional writers, Chaucer, Eliot, Austen Chopin, Wharton, A.S. Byatt, William Trevor	Married	Teacher
8f	56-65	Higher	English and Religious Studies	Travel Writing	Married	Speech Therapist Outreach Worker
9f	26-35	Higher	Degree in English Literature	S.F. Fantasy Contemporary women writers	Partner	Not specified

10m	46-55	Higher	Degree in Literature and Linguistics	Irish comic Sean O'Brian	Partner	Not specified
11m	46-55	Higher	Degree in English, French, German Literature	Betty McDonald, Tolkein Steinbeck	Married	FL Teacher
12m	26-35	Higher	A Level English	Graham Green, Laurens Van der Post Travel writing, fiction, historical novels, biographies	Partner	Teacher
13f	26-35	Higher	A Level English Literature and French	Fiction, particularly women's writing, contemporary literature	Single	EFL Teacher
14f	26-35	Higher	1 st Year European Literature A Level English Literature	Winterson, Eco	Partner	Student EFL Teacher
15f	16-25	Higher	Degree in French with Literature	20 th C Fiction Philosophy	Partner	Student
16m	26-35	Higher	A Level English Literature	Contemporary Fiction Travel Sports	Single	Student
17f	36-45	Higher	Not specified	Poetry – Frost, Muir Biographies, Detective Stories	Single	Not specified
18m	26-35	Higher	A Level Literature Degree in Spanish, French and Portuguese Literature	Latin American Fiction - contemporary	Single	Teacher
19f	26-35	Higher	Degree in English and Related Literature	19 th and 20 th C novel	Single	Teacher

20f	46-55	Higher	PGCE plus Literature	Women Writers, Mitchell, Carter	Divorced	Teacher
21m	16-25	Higher	A level Literature	Biographies, Diaries, non-fiction, Bronte sisters, gay authors	Partner	Research Assistant
22m	26-35	Higher	(linguistic analysis)	Pratchett, Donaldson, Wyndham, Wells	Single	Student
23m	26-35	Higher	Degree in Communication Studies Sociology of popular literature	Donaldson, Banks, K.S. Robinson, Ian Banks, King	Single	Research Associate
24m	26-35	Higher	French literature	US Crime fiction (James Ellroy) British Fiction –	Single	Research Associate

Appendix Thirteen: Stylistics Research Group Discussion

1. V. mmm
2. A. sometimes I (get to erm (.) sometimes it finishes what I
3. thought) and then () isn't that exciting
4. V. yeah that (.) that
5. B. you liked it or you didn't
6. V. yeah
7. A. I liked it very much
- 8 B. you liked it (.) other people are not
9. V. ()
10. B. other people are not going to
11. like it
12. If in fact I (.) I (.) didn't underline because I felt that the sympathy for
13. the male character was in the male (.) the male character was (.) the focalizer
14. V. mmm
15. If and the sympathy for the female character was mainly
16. through her viewpoint except for (.) a few things seen
17. V. mmm
18. If but I
19. couldn't (.) that was why I couldn't state positive or negative
20. V. mmm
21. If because I thought erm (1) I thought the author (.) omniscient narrator whatever
22. it is () he or she is kind of (.) trying to be balanced between both (.) and is quite
23. sympathetic to () show something really nasty about them
24. V. mmm
25. If and switch it and (.) if I () I couldn't tell you if I
25. was (.) saying Joel was positive or Joel was negative and I find (.) both (points of
27. view)
28. V. mmm
29. If ()
30. V. it's interesting that a lot of people have said that they liked the
31. underlining because it made them think not in this story the original story (.) it
32. actually made them (.) think about their answers (.) and they really liked that
33. If well I I I analysed it
- (general discussion)
- 34 B. have you said ()
- 35 If () well I thought well (.) some things are sympathetic about him but that's
36. when you see it from his point of view
37. V. yeah
38. If and then (.) some things are
39. horrible
40. V. yeah
41. If but (.) you know (.) is it blue or red
- (general laughter)
42. If I forget what colour but (.) you know (.) the blue (.) it wouldn't have
43. (.) I wanted to show that's positive about him and that's negative
44. V. what yeah (.) what I actually did I that I've missed off this questionnaire
45. was I I told people on the original one that they could underline something twice
46. in blue and red () and (.) some people that have done the questionnaire ()
47. have done that they've underlined it in blue and red
- 48 6m. but that would be (.) but that would be blue being sympathetic and red
49. unsympathetic whereas you've got (.) blue for Joel

50. V. yeah
51. 6m. and red (.) for (.) Becka
52. V. yeah
53. and then you have to make your decision whether you are
54. V. right
56. 6m. sympathetic or
57. unsympathetic to those characters so
58. V. I've complicated it more because originally I
59. just had 'sympathy' and
60. 6M yeah
61. V. one or the other and now I've got scales of
62. sympathy and and (.) you're right it's confused it
63. 6M well I I think it intersects with
64. the number of times you read it as well because
65. V. mmm
66. 6M the on the first reading (.)
67. you come out (.) I mean I came out on the first reading with sort of (.) you know
68. (.) quite a strong judgement of you know (.) how I feel about these characters and
69. then (.) when I read it again
70. B. what was your judgement on the first reading
71. 6M ok
72. erm (.) I think Joel's a shit (.) and I like Becka (.)
(general laughter)
73. and I think that she's totally
74. 1F but what she did to the cat
75. 6M I think she's totally
76. justified (.)
77. 1F (gasps)
78. 6M I think what she did to the cat is totally justified
79. V. but
80. you see that's another
81. B. but did that did that change (.) cos you said that was your
82. first reading and then
83. 6M erm (.) erm on the second reading (.) erm (.) I began to
84. sort of see more positive things about Joel
85. V. mmm
86. 6M erm (2) and I mean (.) I
87. began to see (.) the more negative things about Becka because (.) but most of the
88. negative things about her are presented through his point of view so
89. V. mmm
90. 6M that
91. information is suspect
92. V. mmm
93. 6M erm
94. V. yeah it's funny that the sympathy for Becka is
95. often mitigated by her actions with the cat (.) that you can't feel totally
96. sympathetic but I mean (.) you've just contradicted that
97. 1F (well I wanted to feel
98. sympathetic towards Becka for one reason because it was(about) relationships
99. V. yeah
100. 1F and then (.) and then you get that (.) nasty bit at the end
101. V. yeah
102. 1F which totally (1) cuts
103. through that
104. V. yeah

105. B. but you didn't have any sympathy for him
 106. 1F erm yes I did
 107. B. you had
 108. some
 109. 1F yes (.) yeah
 110. B. and you felt that you couldn't sympathise with her as
 111. much as you wanted to
 112. 1F yes (.) but I I thought the narrator was trying to (.) kind of
 113. empathise with both by taking their viewpoints
 114. V. yeah
 115. 1F and stand back at the same time
 116. kind of () trick
 117. V. mmm
 118. A. I'm sorry for both of them very much () (understand better)
 119. it's the man
 120. B. you could understand the man better
 121. A. yes
 122. B. why
 123. A. er (.)
 124. probably what you said about the cat
 125. V. yeah
 126. A. I don't think that type of (.)
 127. cruelty can be justified by any kind of passionate () that she did to (.) the cat
 128. (.) ough (.) so (.) I realise that ()
 129. V. it it upset me (.) I'm I'm wondering (.) I mean
 130. (.) it's a difficult thing isn't it (.) but that is another (.) feature (.) fact if you like (.)
 131. whether you you like cats or you don't (laughs) if you actually don't (.) you're not
 132. bothered about the cat (.) I don't what your opinion
 133. 1F I read mine (.) with the cat on
 134. my knee
 135. B. you could give a copy to Jenny
 136. V. Jenny's a cat lover is she
 137. B. yes
 138. 6M I I was (.) I was actually
 139. (.) sort of (.) I mean when I was underlining the things about Joel I didn't like
 140. (.) you know
 141. V. mmm
 142. 6M one of the things that I underlined was (.) he
 143. scratched her between the ears and pulled her up slowly by the tail which he's
 144. convinced cat's like
 145. V. yeah
 146. 6M I thought that was like (.) a sign of just (.) what a (.)
 147. arrogant (.) sort of conceited self centred person Joel was
 148. V. mmm
 149. 6M y' know that he
 150. knows what's right for everyone including cats (.) so that sort of quite upset me I
 151. (.) actually wasn't particularly upset by what she did to the cat
 152. V. mmm
 153. 6M erm (.)
 154. my sympathies weren't with the cat at all
 155. A. you see erm (.) the last line of Joel's ()
 156. Uglypuss he called (.) this is Oedipus of course he was still in a state of shock (.) t
 157. would hit him tomorrow when the full implications of a future without Uglypuss
 158. () and erm (.) that I thought was the crucial (.) erm (.) saving grace for him (.)
 159. that he understands at this point that er (.) () and now he needs to change this so

160. (.) if if he can (.) look at life from a (.) different point of view (.) live it another
 161. way (.) so maybe this is this is the time of lifting of blindness (.) business (.) which
 162. (.) which he's coming to
 163. V. mmm
 164. A. and er () so I could understand him (.) at this
 165. point at least
 166. 6M I think you're being very generous to him at that (.) point (.)
 167. actually (1) I mean I think it's quite a generous (.) reading of of what's happening
 168. (.) I'm not sure that it's a sort of at (.) that deep a moment of realisation at this
 169. point
 170. A. maybe (.) maybe I'm (generous) () (.) but I cannot stand (.) the kind of
 171. uneducated female that Becka is (.) uugh erm (.) so (laughs) vengeance (.)
 172. revenge (.) what kind of woman (would do that)
 173. 6M it's very common (.) I mean I've
 174. (.) been surprised by what women have told me about what they've done in their
 175. 175. lives I mean really surprised I've met women who (.) cut up their (.)
 underwear
 176. and (.) thrust them through (.) the letter box you know of erm (.) the married man
 177. they're having an affair with so that the wife will come down in the morning and
 178. find (.) I mean I I (1) it seems to me that it's quite common
 179. B. () transcribing the tape
 180. (laughs)
 181. 1F ()
 182. V. yeah (laughs)
 183. B. it was (.) from (.) what shall we call him
 184. V. participant er (.) X
 185. (laughs)
 186. B. Peter (laughs)
 (general laughter)
 187. B. sorry (6M) carry on
 188. 6M well I I mean (.) I don't I don't know (.) about
 189. you but I mean I'm really aware of (.) female revenge (.) as (.) as a
 190. 1F it doesn't
 191. mean we have to like it though does it
 192. V. no
 193. 1F I mean we laughed
 195. V. but but you
 196. understand it in a way because you
 197. 1F er (.) no not so much understand (.) that was
 198. why (.) I mean it's quite interesting (.) we've got (6M) coming up here more for (.)
 199. the woman
 200. V. yeah
 201. 1F we're coming out if anything slightly (laughs)
 202. V. yeah
 203. 1F more for the
 204. man
 205. 6M mmm
 206. 1F which is quite interesting
 207. 6M yeah but I'm very much on the woman's
 208. side here 'cos I feel very very strongly (if one needs) to be moral about it (.) this
 209. man (.) I mean she left him (.) he didn't leave her
 210. 1F mmm
 211. 6M and (.) given what he
 212. says (.) given what his opinion of her is (.) as seen from his point of view he should
 213. have left her (2) I mean what (.) my feeling is that what he did was to put her into

214. position which was so sort of psychologically damaging and untenable (.) that it (.)
 215. thoroughly explains why she should do something like this to the cat (2) that that's
 216. all (.) erm (.) so I mean I really feel that (1) I mean it's not that I think she's a (.) a
 217. wonderful person but I do have sympathy for her plight
 218. A. () good short story (thank you
 219. very much) I enjoyed it
 220. V. mmm
 601. A. thanks very much
 602. V. yeah
 603. A. ()
 604. 1F the man who won't commit (.) the
 605. woman who wants commitment and doesn't get it and (.) goes
 606. back and then gets (.) so it's trying to show (.) this lack of
 607. communication (.) both points of view on it (.) and (.) what
 608. you do get is (.) Joel is a shit (.) to Becka 'cos he gets (.) then
 609. you get this (.) sympathy for the cat so you switch and then you
 610. get Becka and you're very sympathetic because she's been
 611. treated very badly by this (guy) (.) and then she does
 612. something horrible to the cat so you switch again (.) so you (.) you
 613. V. yeah (.) yeah
 614. 1F the author is playing with you
 615. B. so you felt that when
 616. you started you felt sympathy for him
 617. 1F erm (.) when I started I
 618. actually thought 'Oh my God not another American female novelist' (laughs)
 619.
 620. 1F I feel I've read a lot of this style but it might not be her (.) but I
 621. thought mmm (laughs)
 622. B. you thought it was a woman
 623. 1F I I thought it
 624. was a woman (.) because I've read this style (.) I've read this style
 625. (.) it could well be
 626. B. you said American woman
 627. 1F American (.) Canadian
 628. (.) somewhere like that (.) North American
 629. V. did you all think (.) what
 630. did you all think
 631. 6M I thought it was a woman
 632. 1F there's no reason why it
 633. should be (.) just
 634. A. I refused to ()
 635. B. you thought it was a woman
 636. 6M yes (.)
 637. excuse me (.) my reasons (.) my reasons are (1) mm (.) yeah
 638. well it's just the
 639. the end was interesting I felt from the woman's point of view (.) and
 640. (.) that it presents (.) a woman's-eye view of how men can be (.) and
 641. thirdly it's the connection somehow (.) between women mothers and
 642. food
 643. V. mmm
 644. 6M in this story (.) there's a lot of (.) the whole triangle of
 645. imagery (.) women mothers and food
 646. V. yeah
 647. 6M and lots of references
 648. to him being hungry and her being hungry (.) and (.) how

705. the style
 706. 1F yes I've read quite a lot of Margaret Atwood
 707. V. I think I think
 708. it's distinctive
 709. 1F yeah (.) yeah (.) there's also a lot of North American
 710. writers like this (.) not just Margaret Atwood
 711. V. mmm
 712. 1F I seem to have read
 713. quite a lot of this style
 714. V. yeah (.) yeah it's interesting the food theme
 715. isn't it
 716. (.) because I said (.) that that would be a significant (.) (.) the link
 717. between women and food
 718. 1F and Margaret Atwood actually doesn't
 719. always (.) come straight down on the women's point of view can show
 720. women quite (.) negatively
 721. V. that's right
 722. 1F like in erm (.) oh about those
 723. horrible little schoolgirls (.) (1) 'Cat's eyes'
 724. V. oh yeah
 725. A. but you could
 726. imagine somebody (who was male writing a book) like this (.)
 727. actually
 728. V. oh yeah (.) I mean (.) there were people that thought it
 729. was a man (.) and I think that's partly because of the
 730. language (.) quite masculine (.) and even the descriptions of
 731. his (.)
 732. 1F I thought that
 733. was a woman seeing how men (.)
 734. V. yeah yeah
 735. 6M yeah (.) I think it's a very
 736. (.) clever (.) depiction of the way that (.) certain men can
 737. be and I'm not saying that women can't be like that either
 738. V. mmm
 739. 6M I'm sure they
 740. can but (.) the character of Joel actually (.) really (.) I mean
 741. I think it really cleverly described
 742. V. mmm
 743. 1F mmm (.)
 744. 6M I have (.) I have met people like
 745. this
 746. A. me too (.) both of them (laughs)
 747. 1F well they're both (egotistical) (.)
 748. 6M
 749. yeah
 750. 1F
 751. in the end they're both (.) unattractive (.) I mean you
 752.
 753. sympathise with . . . egotists (.) then you stand back and think
 754. (.) 'well actually they're both quite horrible to each other'
 755. A. (.) my reason for thinking it was a man
 756. (.)
 757. 6M but it's interesting that you (said at first that you thought that it was a
 758. woman)
 759. V. did you knowing that that was Atwood (.) change the way that

760. 1F well I was I couldn't find it (laughs) this short story so I couldn't check (.)
 761. which collection is it
 762. V erm (.)
 763. E so you went through and
 764. F after I'd finished
 765. E no it's alright
 766. 1F I thought I must find out (laughs) I went and had a look
 767. A. (.)
 768. V. someone else who (didn't do that) actually read the story and resisted feeling
 769. sympathy for the woman because she didn't like being manipulated into that
 770. position by Atwood (.) she resisted
 772. 771. B. so she guessed
 773. V. yeah(.) because it was just another feminist story
 774. A. (.)
 775. J I found it sort of difficult to answer (.) erm I mean I really (.) I mean
 776. especially when you asked 'how would you describe these characters' (.) I came
 777. up with two words (.) one for him and one for her (.) and then I really had to (.)
 778. make myself write more erm
 779. A. it's not necessarily a bad thing is it (people giving just one word)
 780. V no I think the difference is that er having people describe them actually
 781. relates to the things that I'm researching the different ways that people
 782. describe relate to that (.) I suppose it's worth talking about that
 (discussion of point of view - research)
 783. 6M well I had difficulty in erm (.) in describing her (.) independently (.) I mean
 784. my description of her for example (.) ends up being (.) in terms of him (.) so she
 785. is like (.) not as clever as him (.) she's not as independent she's consumed by the
 786. injustice of their relationship she's more conventional than him (.) I realised
 787. that (.) I just found it quite difficult to say she is x y and z (.) partly because (.)
 788. most of the information you get is via him in the first place (.) and then when
 789. you see her at the end she's in a rather (.) extreme (.) erm state so
 790. V was that the effect of having most of it told by him
 791. 6M possibly
 792. 1F he reveals himself by (.)
 793. V. (to 1F) did you have that problem (.)
 794. 1F I think it's a story about relationships and that's (.)
 (discussion of theory of point of view)
 795. 6M no it's not the case at all (.) I mean I found question 2 'did you enjoy reading
 796. it? very much quite a lot ok not much not at all' (.) I ticked two of those
 797. (laughter) no (laughs) just (.) I'm just being awkward (.) with an arrow because
 798. (.) because in fact I found the Joel section really tiresome and I found it really
 799. tiresome to read and I really didn't start enjoying the story until I got to the
 800. Becka section (.) so there's a sense in which (.) yes(.) bits of it were ok you know
 801. (.) do I have to read this (.) then by the end I'd enjoyed it very much but that
 802. was (.) an effect of the accumulation (.) and erm (.) then I realised that actually
 803. (.) the tiresomeness of the Joel section (.) I felt was intentional (.) I felt that (.)
 804. that section was intended to have the same effect on me that he had on her (.)
 805. do you see what I mean
 806. V. yeah (so it was a quite refreshing to have her point of view)
 807. 6M yes ...well he has all sorts of positive qualities that's the interesting thing
 808. about him he has lots of things that I think 'gosh you know this is quite an
 809. interesting guy' (.) but at the same time (.) he's so clearly self centred and erm
 810. inconsiderate that (.) the effect that he has on other people around him that (.)
 811. that (.) you can't have any sympathy and even his positive qualities (.) are
 812. presented ironically by the narrator (.) I mean that's the thing that struck me

813. (.) I mean I liked him (.) I liked the fact he's into street theatre (.) and I liked
 814. the fact that he had all this political courage to do these things (.) that were
 815. getting him a lot of flack from other people (.) you know so he had the courage
 816. to be controversial (.) he had the courage to sort of stand up for a certain
 817. position in life that (.) ordinary people or people around him wouldn't
 818. sympathise with (.) erm but he's a bit paranoid as a result becausB...
 819. 1F (9) (that's his Jewishness)
 820. 6M but he's attacked for not being Jewish enough (.0 I mean he's attacked for (.)
 821. erm (.) standing up for Lebanon and the Palestinians despite being Jewish (.)
 822. and with all that I have a lot of sympathy for (.) but nevertheless the way she
 823. presents (.) all that street theatre thing is like highly ironic (.) there's a bit (.) on
 824. page ninety five or something you know (.) where you get 'He sees a girl he
 825. knows slightly, remembers from the summer, when they were doing the
 826. Cannibal Monster Tomato play down near Leamington, for the itinerant
 827. harvesters. (Cold-water shacks. Insecticides in the lungs. No medical protection.
 828. Intimidation. It was a good piecB.)' (.) I mean the irony behind that I think (.)
 829. undercuts (.) whatever sympathy I feel for all his positive qualities.
 830. B. (so you were sensitive to the narrator's attitude)
 831. 6M yes (.) I felt that the narrator was presenting this man ironically (.) not just
 832. through his own point of view but actually undercutting (.) or that could partly
 833. be his own point of view
 834. V. (yes that's how I read it)
 835. 6M his own self-reflexive (.) yeah
 836. A. () she wants to have children () now if you want to have children ()
 837. (tape very indistinct but A. arguing that Becka's actions with the cat show she
 838. is too irresponsible to have children)
 839. if she can be this person who wants to have children then she's a very warped
 840. person herself

841. V. (asked A. if sympathy for Joel was result of B's actions)
 842. A. (I don't think she should have done this to the cat)
 843. 1F I believe in this idea that it's a natural thing that when you have someone's
 844. point of view you do sympathise () but I think (.) standing back I think they
 845. both do actions that I don't like so I think () because I veer from sympathy
 846. when () you see into her thoughts ()
 847. 6M I think the more I read it the more I (.) end up even-ing out (.) erm (.) but
 848. initially I felt (.) that the way it was constructed (.) it was somehow constructed
 849. to (.) justify or explain that extreme (.) to provide a context in which you accept
 850. A. () just the fact that she could do a physical thing to a cat () so I have this
 851. terrible feeling that I would go and kick people in the shin (.) but I don't do it
 852. 1F have you got cats
 853. A. no (1) my best friend has
 854. V. it does make a difference ()
 855. 1F () read this with you cat over your shoulders
 856. (laughs)
 857. B. you could definitely ask people ()
 858. V. (discussion of research - aims)
 859. 6M there's another aspect to it if you were going to give me you know a prize for
 860. attending (.) an evening with either Joel or Becka I'd rather have an evening
 861. with Joel that Becka do you know what I mean because he'd be more fun (.)
 862. witty and she'd be actually rather tedious etc. etc....do you see what I mean
 863. sympathy is sympathy I mean (.) you recognise that he is the more interesting
 864. character as a person you know (.) as a representation of a person he's more
 865. interesting than she is (.) erm but yet you can have more symbolic sympathy for
 866. her (.) nevertheless

867. B. you dislike him intensely though
868. 6M you see I felt pushed by the questionnaire (.) I felt pushed to
869. B. (to A.) (but overall you had a fairly clear cut position)
870. 6M I felt that the way that she's presented negatively though his point of view is
871. so sort of consistent that by the end of his section (.) erm a well of kind of
872. curiosity about her built up in me so I was more than prepared to be
873. sympathetic towards her because you know I mean she's been so sort of
874. destroyed by his description of her
875. V. yeah
876. 6M that that actually created sympathy for her in me
877. V (Joel's section - complete story in itself)
878. B. do you think it would have been fair to give people the questionnaire to read
879. after reading Joel's part
880. 1F I think I would be more pro-women if I'd just had the Joel section actually(.)
881. because (won't commit to her using women for sex here we go again) ()
- (confusion of voices on tape tape indistinct)
882. 1F you've read this before (.) you've seen this happening (I would be more
883. positive Becca would react) kill the cat at the end (laughs) (tape indistinct) very
884. dramatic ()
885. because you've seen Joel (.) it's his point of view () then you get 'oh poor
886. Becca' () (general laughter)
887. V. (at the end of Joel's section you don't know whether she's killed the cat)
888. 1F no but as I'm saying she's got this Joel thing and he obviously can't be ()
889. trouble with relationships () and it does seem like a very natural (woman's
890. written it) at that point (.) and then you've got (Becca's reaction)
891. 6M yes except it gets redescribed as a hatchet)
892. 1F (there's blood on the right one) (.) you're really certain she's killed the cat at
893. this point
- (laughter)
894. A. (indistinct - but again makes reference to Becca's 'cold-blooded killing' of
895. the cat - and 'how can she do it?') I don't think she's blinded by passion ()
896. B. (so you feel sorry for him I mean you're upset about the cat but you
897. sympathise)
898. A. no it serves him right I think (.) I'm sorry for the cat
899. 6M it's similar to what happens with Medea you know because(.) I know with
900. Medea you're supposed to get some kind of balanced reaction where you're
901. aware that this woman () murders her children and burns (alive on the fire)
902. been totally on her side
903. V. (don't get to know the children)
904. 6M doesn't she go away with the () at the end (.) oh no she does kill her children
905. by pure erm (.) they're bodies are displayed on stage they're killed off stage but
906. () but I've always felt that Medea was like a great feminist heroine ()
907. A. () (it's not a normal thing to do)
908. B. (you all had reactions to () sympathy for one or the other () some people
909. oscillating between liking and non liking () reaction (.) some kind of evaluation
911. 910. as you go along)
912. V. (distinction - identification - liking - sympathy)
- A. (tape indistinct)
- (general laughter)
913. A. it's really my image of a cat and ()
914. V. (interesting that no one mentions the fact that she destroys the flat)
915. B. (the cat - part of the plot)
916. 1F the cat's the heroine (laughter)
917. 6M well I'm intrigued (.) I'm interested in what happens to the cat (.) I feel as if
918. this story has been set up in order to erm (.) explain or justify that sort of

919. action

920. 1F yeah I agree I felt sympathy I knew why she'd done it to the cat but I still felt

921. it was a horrible thing to do to a cat so I switched ()

922. B. but you felt that you were aligning yourself to what would be (.) the story

923. wanted you to do

924. 6M no I (.) maybe that's my interpretation of

925. B. but you had that feeling

926. 6M my feeling is the story is constructed erm (.) to have that effect so that (.) and

927. that's why the Joel section is so long because you know I started reading the

928. Joel section last night and I was wanting to go to bed and thinking 'God it's

929. tedious what a tedious ramble this is' you know (.) and then having got to the

930. Becka section it's like bing you know (.) woke up (.) but there's lots of stuff in

931. the Becka section about (.) about (.) you know (.) 'she can't believe she's done

932. what she's just done (.) this is what he's turned me into she thinks' (.) and 'I

933. was never this mean before I used to be a nice person () and so on (.) and

934. there's all that stuff where she displays responsibility for what she's done and

935. (.) you can take two lines on that you can either say 'well (.) erm (.) she

936. shouldn't have stayed she should have walked out earlier er cause she can't sort

937. of blame him now' erm (.) or you can sort of see (.) be more sympathetic

938. perhaps and say that in fact she couldn't leave because he meant so much and

939. (.) Becka got (.) sort of pushed into further ()

(tape indistinct)

940. 6M maybe that's me projecting my own interpretation onto what I think the

941. author intended

942. A. (tape indistinct but puts forward an opinion that there is a

943. connection/allusion to Oedipus myth)

944. 6M there is the whole thing about cutting his nuts off

945. V. that's true yeah

946. 6M castration (.) I mean these people keep ringing up and saying 'I'm going to

947. cut your nuts off' (.) and there is that connection (.) it hadn't occurred to me

948. before

(tape indistinct - several people talking - suggestion - cat = Becka)

949. 6M he does (.) he does 'make pointed analyses of Uglypuss' sexual hangups to

950. Becka over breakfast' (.) erm and there is an impression that the cat is her (.)

951. this stuff about ()

(again several people talking)

952. 1F that was very unpleasant ()

(discussion of research - problems of finding suitable story)

953. 1F it's very readable

954. 6M I mean the first word that sprang to mind about him is self centred (.) but

955. when I thought about it I thought that that has actually positive and negative

956. connotations and a sense of selfishness which I think is fairly unkind (.) but

957. there's also centred in himself (.) you know (.) he knows who he is (.) he knows

958. what he wants (.) he knows the way he wants to be at the moment he can sort of

959. (act in or engage in) and so on (.) but she can't (.) she's sort of dependent (.) a

960. derivative character who derives all her meaning from being with him and

961. that's (.) her trap (.) so in the sense that he's an autonomous individual he's

962. quite attractive (.) for all his (.) I mean I even like the sexist bits you know I sort

963. of find that (.) I mean the ruthless way in which he picks up that woman and

964. then starts calculating about (.) whether she's going to be a repeater or not (.) I

965. just think I found that () in the kitchen all this sort of stuff

(tape indistinct)

966. A. () I found Joel to be as aggressive

(general agreement)

967. 6M mm (.) very (.) very (.)

A. (indistinct)

B./V (discussion - role of reader - interaction - research aims)

(A. tape indistinct)

(discussion of rewriting)

(sympathy as liking/understanding/pity)

968. 1F (1st person narratives)

969. 6M this was a good example of the kind of story that you read very much in

979. terms of your own experience of relationships and you identify accordingly (.)

980. according to say what roles or positions you may have found yourself in in the

981. past (.) but there are lots of other things that I read (.) which are to do with

982. getting away from these things you know (.) your read stuff (1) which you can't

983. identify with but because you want to read about something different ()

984. (discusses novel) I don't identify with any of the characters but that's a

985. wonderful kind of novelist with all sorts of extraordinary characters er (.) and

986. that's not an identification that's working there it's more (.) well identification

987. in another sense of (.) instead of saying 'this is like me' (.) you're saying (.) 'this

988. is a possibility for myself' (.) do you know what I mean instead of bringing the

989. text into yourself and saying 'this text is like me' (.) you're putting (.) yourself

990. into the text and allowing yourself new possibilities of being (.) and it's not

991. identification in the sense of 'gosh I've been down this (.)

992. B. yeah yeah (.) I know what you mean

993. 6M whereas for me() there was still an element of

994. V. real life

995. 6M yeah

Appendix 14 Interview Questions, Comparative Study

1. Do you have any objection to being tape-recorded?
2. Was there anything in the story which reminded you of
 - a) anything in your own experience?
 - b) anything that you have heard about?
 - c) anything that you have read/ read about?
3. What were your feelings at the end of the story? what do you think happened next?
4. How true to life/realistic do you think it is?.

reasons?

5. Did your feelings about the characters change at any point in the story?
why?

6. Did you feel differently about the characters at the beginning of the story than you did at the end?

7. do you think you would have felt differently about the characters if Becka's version of events had been given first?

8. What effect did Becka's actions with Uglypuss have on your feelings about her?

9. Are there any comments that you would have liked to have made but were not given the opportunity?

10. Do you have any general comments about the task or the questionnaire?

Appendix Fifteen: Questionnaire and Interview Transcripts, Comparative Study

Participant A(m)

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. After recently separating Joel and Becka are trying to come to terms with the
2. consequent emotional fall out. In doing so they both embark on some soul
3. searching taking stock pondering on the past present and what they want for the
4. future. As they do so Becka is willing to try again whereas Joel is not as they both
5. seemingly try to
6. cope also with the onset of 'mid-life crisis'.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

6. A. not at all

Please try to give reasons for your answer

7. A. I didn't feel educated or entertained by the main protagonists' sides of the story or
8. the story as a whole. It seemed to me as if it was a transcript of a marriage guidance
9. encounter which has been fleshed out in order to make a short story. It would have
10. been more educational had it been factual rather than fictional therefore to me much
11. more interesting instead of being a type of 'right on' Clare Raynor.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

12. A. Joel to me is seemingly a man who is a lapsed member of the Jewish faith. He is
13. self-centred, egocentric, vain, ideologically boring and perhaps therefore not
14. surprisingly lonely. He is also a manipulative scheming type of person which no
15. doubt is of use in his work as a director.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

16. A. totally unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

17. A. I have no sympathy towards Joel because despite outwardly being seen to support
18. just causes, inwardly he has no loyalty or real affection for anyone in his life except
19. his cat and typewriter. To me this is because he can control both of these as he doesn't
20. really like the idea of give and take between partners, he wants to dominate and
21. manipulate. The only smidgin of sympathy I can find for him is from his childhood
22. (the route of all adult emotional problems?) searching for food his mother hid but
23. wanted him to find anyway.

Q. 5 How would you describe Becka?

24. A. Becka to me is insecure, vain, naive, lonely and lacking in confidence. However
25. she is caring, well reasonably anyway and genuine in what she believes despite being
26. faddy and compulsive.

Q. 6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

27. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

28. A. I'm fairly sympathetic to Becka as she seems to have tried hard to make the
 29. relationship work between herself and Joel without getting anything back in return
 30. unless Joel thought he could get even more out of it. She stayed with him despite his
 31. cold logic over the affairs he had and his lack of long term commitment. Instead after
 32. over two years of living together and failing to meet Joel's criteria and a reconciliation
 33. attempt she is treated as no more than an acquaintance. However I don't agree with
 34. her method of revenge with Uglypuss, though she does feel quite guilty afterwards.

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

35. A. Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

36. A. I think the author sympathises with Becka because of some of the reasons above.
 37. Also the last thought we know of that Joel had is of giving his cat a dumb name
 38. whereas Becka's heart is bleeding. Prior to this Becka is questioning herself as to
 39. whether it is maybe her fault whereas Joel does not see any fault lie with him. She had
 40. hope and loved him he saw her as someone he could mould and keep furry like his
 41. cat.

Q. 8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

42. A. I'm not 100% sure

Please try to give reasons for your answer

43. The reason why I'm not 100% certain is that the story could also have been called man
 44. loves his cat more than his girlfriend. This could have come from cobbling together
 45. several letters to a problem page in a newspaper or magazine and these days there are
 46. almost as many agony uncles as there are aunts. However whoever wrote it comes
 47. from Toronto and I would bet their books are published by Virago over here

Participant 1f (see Stylistics Research Group discussion)

(story not returned)

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1.A. It seems to be about a relationship seen from the perspective firstly of the male
 2.partner and then of the female. It illustrates the lack of understanding and the struggle
 3. between the sexes.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

4.A. very much

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

5. It's well written and it's always interesting (for me at least) to read a piece of fiction
 6. that tries to get inside its characters' minds.

Q. 3. How would you describe Joel?

4. A. Leftish Jewish emotionally cold (because of his childhood), well-meaning according
5. to his own lights but almost bound to come into conflict with his female partners - he's
6. promiscuous, not very 'domesticated', emotionally distant, refuses to commit himself in
7. his relationship.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

10. A. no opinion

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

8. A. I've had to put 'no opinion' because my reaction to him veered from feeling
11. sympathetic to not liking him as different aspects of his personality were revealed in
- 12 his speech and actions.
- 13 One feels sympathy because the first part of the story is written from his point of view
- 14 but one also turns against him because of callous actions such as deliberately going
15. round when his girlfriend is due to come round (although, because we see into his
16. mind, we sort of understand why he does it).

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

19. A. Becka is leftish, feminist, Jewish, confident on the outside, lonely on the inside -
20. desperately seeking affection (see her attempt to go back to Joel). Basically a decent
21. person who shows a nasty side of her character when she avenges herself on Joel
22. (poor Uglypuss!).

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

23. A. no opinion (again because I veer again from sympathy to dislike).

24. A. As a woman, I want to identify with her more, but we only really get her
25. perspective after she has committed the dastardly act of abducting Uglypuss and after
26. we are led to believe she has murdered her with an axe. (I'm writing this with one of
27. my cats sleeping by me). But, although she is not presented in the best of lights
28. (namely, in the act of getting revenge), again because we have her perspective we
30. met by her ex-partner).

Q. 7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

31. A. Both equally

Please try to give reasons for your answer

32. I say both and neither because the author tries to be objective about them both (use of
33. 3rd person narration) but also tries to give us an insight into how their minds work
34. (each is the focaliser in their section of the story) and this makes them more
35. sympathetic.

Q8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

36. A. A woman

Q.9 Please try to give reasons for your answer

37. A. A sexist reason. because of the concern with the interior life, with emotions,

38. motivations, relationships - areas in which women have traditionally concentrated on 3

9. in the novel.

Participant 2f

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. Joel is reflecting on his life and relationship with Becka. Unsettled, unfulfilled but
2. creatively and emotionally he seeks solace in food - as he has always done. Casual
3. relationships are the norm with him. Becka is emotionally frustrated and reluctantly
4. 'hung up' on Joel.

Q.2. Did you enjoy reading it?

5. A. o.k.

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

6. A. Mainly because it was enforced for this questionnaire and, for this purpose, over-
7. long.

Q.3. How would you describe Joel?

8. Immature, unfulfilled, repressed

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

9. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

- 10A. He's struggling against victimisation by his landlord, an anonymous caller, Becka
11. too, in a way. He'd like to feel detached, to live for his art to be intellectual, but fails
12. miserably. His only soulmate is the cat. He's even like an unsure teenager 'chatting up'
13. a girl.

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

13. A. More 'together', ecologically aware, looks after her body (in terms of proper food)
14. but emotionally insecure. Childish in her revenge - gives way to justifiable emotion
15. and then regrets how far she's gone.

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

17. A. very sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

18. A. She's worked hard at the relationship and been let down. She is vulnerable, used by
19. Joel and rejected constantly. She'd like to be needed and can't imagine life without a
20. man.

Q.7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

21. A. mostly Joel

Please try to give reasons for your answer

22. A. The majority of the story is centred on his feelings, his life, his surroundings.

23. Becka is a way of 'enlarging' Joel's character.

Q.8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

24. A. man (no reasons given)

Participant 3f

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. An unsuccessful attempt to negotiate the end of a relationship in which both parties
2. suffer but for different reasons.
3. *And the cat!

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

4. A. o.k.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

5. A. Alienated to a degree by the lack of shared values with either character - unable to
6. occupy the position of 'implied reader' to fully engage with the text.

Q.3. How would you describe Joel?

7. A. A misogynist of low - average intelligence

Q.4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

8. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

9. A. sympathies slide from a high degree of sympathy at the beginning of the text - Joel
10. as 'victim' (possibly because of narrative technique of 3rd person narration from J's
11. point of view) to complete disaffection with the character whose utterances build into
12. a misogynistic world view.

Q.5. How would you describe Becka?

13. A. A stereotype

Q.6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

14. A. no opinion

Please try to give reasons for your answer

15. A. Speaks in clichés. Defines herself in relation to Joel, not in relation to the world
16. and herself. Identifies with the cat (Ugly Puss/y)

Q.7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

17. A. mostly Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

18. A. Much of the text is devoted to detailing the unpleasant nature of Joel's attitude to
19. women. Little time is spent on Becka's character analysis - almost as if it is a 'given'
20. that female = good, it is not seen as necessary to expand an understood role of
21. 'righteous female rage'.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

22. A woman - parodying the narrative technique of, say, Mailer or Updike or even

23. Hemingway's 'Cat in the rain'.

Q.9. Please try to give reasons for your answer

24.A. See previous answer

Participant 4f

Q.1. In a few sentences please try to give reasons for your answer.

1. A. Describes relationship between a man and woman - both (present) views on their
2. lives

Q.2. Did you enjoy reading it?

3. A. o.k.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

4. I didn't give it the full attention it deserves and haven't really been able to absorb it
5. fully.

Q.3. How would you describe Joel?

6. A. Has certain views which he feels he keeps up lo-principled (?) - too strong a word
7. (?)

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

8. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

9. Perhaps sympathetic in the way he is (viewed) by others (yet) he seems quite
10. comfortable in being the way he is and doesn't seem to require much of our sympathy
- 11- (induces) more (kind) of admiration (for the) (readers)

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

12. A. Someone who goes and gets what she wants (but) is still willing to settle for
13. second best if she doesn't

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

14. A. no opinion

Please try to give reasons for your answer

15. Didn't read text well enough to make an in depth or even a superficial assessment of
16. her character.

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

17. A. mostly Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

18. A. Presents Joel as a comic character - style informal, casual. Becka shown as a
19. sensitive (?) person

(Q.8, 9 not answered)

Participant 5f

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. Joel and Becka have recently split up. Becka rings Joel and arranges to come round
2. to his place to talk about it. Then he decides he can't face her and goes out for a meal.
3. He meets Amelia in a restaurant and goes back with her. They make love, he leaves her
4. and returns to his place to find Becka has ripped his favourite chair and kidnapped his
5. cat and put it in a rubbish bin. Story ends with them both wandering the streets, Joel
6. looking for his cat, Becka thinking about Joel.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

7. A. quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer

8. A. I enjoyed the humour about the street theatre group and humour generally. I enjoyed
9. wondering whether Uglypuss was dead or alive! I liked the two sides to the
10. relationship. I liked the change of emotion at the end, where the story moved from the
11. slightly humorous, ironic vein into 'mad with grief...like her' and 'My heart does not
12. bleed...but it does'.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

13. A. Weak, in some ways, though he says he never pulls his punches - that's only in the
14. street theatre, rather than in his private life. He feels put upon - the weather, the
15. landlord, Becka etc.
16. Lazy maybe - he doesn't cook or clean for himself.
17. Indecisive
18. Identity crisis - he's Jewish but the theatre offends Jewish community.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

19. A. fairly sympathetic - fairly unsympathetic (two boxes ticked)

Please try to give reasons for your answer

20. I'm sympathetic because of his childhood e.g. the cooking section on p.88-89 and
21. comments about his home pg. 95. I've ticked two boxes because my sympathies vary -
22. at times I can see precisely why Becka ruins his flat, but I also see his point of view,
23. especially when events are presented from his point of view e.g. Becka's comments on
24. his 'baldness'. I'm slightly sympathetic when he gets threatening phone-call, and egg-
25. throwing but that is mitigated by the fact that he's probably asked for it because of the
26. nature of the street theatre *I'm very sympathetic when he realises she's taken
27. Uglypuss* I'm sympathetic with his racial identity problems.

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

28. A. Possibly a stronger character than Joel: more active and less indecisive than he is
29. Manipulative

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

30. A. fairly sympathetic - fairly unsympathetic (two boxes ticked)

Please try to give reasons for your answer

31. A. Again, my sympathies, or lack of them, vary according to different parts of the
 32. story. She says and does some rotten things to him. My greater sympathy for her is
 33. right at the end, despite what she's done to the cat! Final 2 sentences leave me with
 34. greatest sympathy for her. The 'martyr' image in the 'penitential night-gown' makes
 35. me unsympathetic.

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

36. A. both equally

Please try to give reasons for your answer

37. A. As the viewpoint changes, so do my sympathies. By the end of the story I think the
 38. author, having given us part of both characters' points of view/strengths and
 39. weaknesses probably wants us to sympathise with both of them.

Q.8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or man?

40. A. A woman

Q.9 Please try to give reasons for your answer

41. A. Sorry, I've seen it before, though I haven't read it properly before! Knowing who
 42. wrote it, makes it difficult to answer your question as if on first reading. If I looked
 43. for textual evidence, I'd still probably make my data fit what I already know about the
 44. author.

Participant 6m

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. It's about the end - or aftermath- of a relationship. The woman has loved the man
2. more than she's been loved in return and, as a result, has suffered the greater
3. psychological damage. This justifies the revenge she takes on him, or at least explains!

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

4. A. very much, quite a lot, o.k. (three boxes ticked with arrow going from 'o.k'. to 'very
5. much'.)

Please try to give reasons for your answer

6. A. I enjoyed the Becka section much more than the Joel section. While I was reading
7. the Joel section I found it tiresome from time to time. Once I got onto the Becka
8. section it became clear that that was somehow part of the point. His section has
9. something of the same effect on me as he has had on her.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

- 10 A. Self-centred - in both positive and negative senses. Arrogant, knows what he
11. believes, courageous in not adjusting his beliefs/behaviour to suit people around him.
12. Calculating, cynically detached, somewhat a user. Intelligent, witty, vain.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

13. A. Fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

14. A. Essentially the same as overleaf. I feel that if he felt towards Becka as he appears
16. to narrate, he should have had the courage to leave her. Instead he seems to carry on
16. the relationship without any awareness of the impact it was having on her.

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

17. A. Hurt. Definitely the unequal partner in this relationship, unable to realise herself
17. within the framework provided by his responses to her. Not as clever as him, not as
18. independent, consumed by the injustice of their relationship. More conventional than
20. him. Needy.

Q.6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

21. A. Fairly sympathetic

(no reasons given)

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

22. A. mostly Becka, Becka (two boxes ticked with arrow going from 'mostly...' to 'Becka')

Please try to give reasons for your answer

23. A. i) Principally, the structure of the story. The way Becka gets end-focus, with the
 24. story ending on her attempt to patch up her grief.

25. ii) the way she gets relentlessly negatively presented through J's p.o.v. makes me
 26. curious about what her experience of this man was like and generates suspicion of
 27. him and sympathy for her.

28. iii) Joel's positive qualities e.g. his political 'independence' are presented ironically -
 29. cf. p.95 description of street- theatre piece.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

30. A. A woman

Q.9. Please try to give reasons for your answer

31. i) the evident sympathy for the woman's p.o.v.

32. ii) the woman's eye- view of how men can be

33. iii) the connection between women/ mothers and food.

Participant 7f

Q.1. In a few sentences please try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. The story deals with the aftermath of a broken relationship, a relationship doomed
2. to be broken because the central characters, Joel and Becka, are 'damaged'. Joel has
2. been let down by his mother, Becka by men in general. The story also shows how both
4. are committed social idealists but how this, too, has let them down. A story of
5. dysfunction and disillusionment.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

6. A. O.k.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

7. I enjoyed the style of writing - the two uncommunicated monologues creating an
- 8 unresolved 'broken' feel to the story structure. I also like some of the language features
9. - 'he's not sure he feels like going through the whole wash and spin cycle once again'. .
10. However, I felt that the length was somewhat self-indulgent and tended, for me, to
11. lose whatever focus might be intended.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

12. A. Joel is an older, more self - assured character than Becka - a idealist with a strong
13. streak of pragmatism who has little truck with the politically-correct purists. He has.
14. little real warmth towards women/others, unable to trust them, betrayed by his mother
- 15(a Freudian dream?), but his potential warmth is seen in response only to his cat.
16. Becka would, I feel, not betray him and some of the tragedy of this tale is his failure to
17. see this. Joel is a free spirit, liking his space, his moral freedom. He is possibly
18. caught in a mid-life crisis though I suspect, for him, it is more of a 'life' crisis.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

19. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

19. A. The way the majority of the tale is told forces the reader to side, or at least aid and
20. abet, with Joel - we are given his perspective. Although, on the surface, his attitude to .
21. woman, as seen in the interlude with Amelia, repels me with its stereotypical mcp
22. elements, enough is hinted at to arouse some pity: the unhappy childhood, the
23. alienation from all social groups (he is 'anti-Semite/anti-Jew '), his desire for sex only
24. as a prelude to intimacy...

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

26. A. Becka is an earnest but 'trendy' socialist - she has done all the right things -
27. food fads etc. However, she is not as 'modern' as she'd like to believe - she settled for
28. living with Joel when marriage might be more to her liking with its permanence. She
29. 'needs' a man, any will do by the end of the tale. She has a poor self-image and to Joel
30. she seems domineering, though in the tale she appears a strange mixture of feisty
31. energy and weak despair.

Q. 6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

32. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

33. A. Again, via monologue we are given 'access' to Becka and hence she can call on our.
 34. pity - factors are present to make us pity her. But, the small space allotted to her
 35. compared to Joel and the fact that we have already 'seen' her through the filter of
 36. Joel's monologue, limit our sympathy. her energy appeals but her self-pity at the end
 37. does not.

Q.7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

38. A. both equally

Please try to give reasons for your answer

39. directly to the reader and the terse power of the last sentence remains. However, Joel
 40. too is hurting, but less obviously and he is given space to gain sympathy whilst being
 41. quite objectionable as a character - the sympathy is harder to find.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

42. A. Not sure - woman I think

Q.9. Please try to give reasons for your answer

43. A. A very old-fashioned and probably fallacious notion that women tend to be more
 44. tuned in to relationships and emotions and write about them more. The gender roles
 45. throw me - Becka is not the 'strong woman' of feminist championing nor Joel the
 46. unexplained mcp. An attempt at delivering male psychology and female - an author
 47. who sees two sides to the tale?

Participant 7f Interview

1. V. was there anything that reminded you either of your own experience or
2. something that you'd heard about or been told about
3. P. erm (1) yeah I think most people can identify with either broken relationships or
4. erm (2) maybe feelings of hurt and rejection and (.) not being sure how to react to
5. them I think
6. V. right (.) what were your feelings at the end of the story (.) what did you think
7. happened next
8. P. erm (1) I don't think it had a happy ending erm (.) I actually felt a bit (1) maybe
9. there was unfinished business at the end (.) and at the same time (.) I felt that that
10. mirrored the kind of brokenness that they were trying to portray in the story erm
11. (.) but I wouldn't say it left me thinking 'oh that (.) that was nice' because (.) I
12. actually felt it was very sad at the end
13. V. yeah (.) right (.) so you didn't think they were going to get back together
14. P. no
15. V. how true to life or realistic do you think it was
16. P. I thought it was fairly realistic (.) I don't know whether anybody would be
17. provoked quite so far as to do such cruelty things to a cat I don't know but er (.) I
18. think most people would relate to the (.) sort of wanting to do something erm (.)
19. and doing things on the spur of the moment that otherwise you might not er (.) so I
20. actually did feel when I was reading it I felt it was quite realistic
21. V. right (.) it was just the cat was it
22. P. yes
23. V. did your feelings about the characters change at any point
24. P. erm (.) yes I think with the two different narrators (.) I felt in the first part I
25. didn't actually dislike Becka erm (.) but I felt that when it switched to (.) more of
26. her thoughts (.) I actually felt more sympathy for her (.) and less for Joel (1) but
27. again whether that's the deliberate effect of having two kind of narrators...I think
28. as it went on I maybe distanced myself slightly (.) thinking well (.) you know (.)
29. there are faults in this character that I don't particularly like and (.) and maybe
30. there are points of Becka's that (.) aren't as bad as he's making out
31. V. right yeah (.) did you feel differently about the characters at the end than you
32. did at the beginning
33. P. yes I think so yeah (.) I mean I wouldn't say (.) at the beginning that I
34. particularly (.) took to Joel (.) erm (.) but I think by the end I've got to have more
35. sympathy for both of them (.) maybe slightly more balanced
36. V. do you think that was because of the incident with the cat
37. P. yeah really I think it's his (.) thoughts about the cat and whether it had (.) maybe
38. more important (.) I mean it's just kind of (.) something that she was provoked to
39. do (.) (whether her name) and she certainly considers herself to be ugly erm (.) was
40. sort of symbolic as well (.) that she was putting herself (.) in the bin and (.) losing
41. herself or starting again (.) but there again maybe I'm trying too hard on that one
42. (laughs) (1)
43. V. yeah
44. P. I have two cats outside
45. V. ...would you have felt differently if Becka's version of events had been
46. presented first do you think would that have had an effect on your sympathy for
47. the characters
48. P. I think if Joel's had come after I still think I would have felt the same at the end
49. if I just had one viewpoint (.) then probably I would have felt differently
50. V. Right
51. P. But not radically differently I don't think I think when I was reading I felt that I
52. was picking out things I didn't like about Joel even though I was sympathetic and
53. vice versa

56. V. Right (.) erm... what effect did Becka's action with the cat have on your
 57. feelings towards her
 58. P. I certainly think she went down in my estimation (laughs) I quite like women
 59. who take a (.) not an aggressive role but who actually are a little bit more active
 60. than maybe the sort of normal passive roles in literature but (.) going as far as to (.)
 61. gas a cat and bin it maybe her remorse afterwards (.) did something to redress the
 62. balance (.) maybe actively showing her independence but not not not by gassing a .
 63. cat (laughs)
 64. V. No (.) erm are there any comments you which to make about the story that you
 65. hadn't space to on the questionnaire
 66. P. I think I wrote fairly small actually (laughs) try and get it on it's not the sort of
 67. story that I would say I really enjoyed reading that but I quite (.) I think I
 68. appreciated some of the techniques that were used which made it worthwhile
 69. reading
 70. V. Right yeah good...

71. P. I think it took me a reasonable amount of time but I find that sort of thing
 72. thinking about writing quite interesting so (.) I didn't actually mind filling it in

Comments - teaches point of view - claims has made her more aware when reading

Participant 8f

Q. 1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. Two characters have come to the end of a relationship. The first 17 pages set the
2. scene and review the situation from Joel's point of view. The last 9 or 10 represent
3. Becka's. The sub-plot is a difference between stereotypical male/female sexuality. One
4. needing freedom and libido the other affection and commitment.

Q.3. How would you describe Joel?

5. A. Almost stereotypical product of a loveless, uncommunicating
6. home.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

7. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

8. A. I feel that I am resisting the author's picture of Joel. He is (for instance), depicted as
9. living in a disorganised mess partly out of principle and I think what a prat. He blames
9. other people for his situation. The picture of Joel the seducer is interesting. But sex is
10. Joel's attempt at communication. His visualisings of Becka and Amelia are as of
11. object (not subjects).

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

13. A. 1 character in context - a 'liberated' woman with a yearning to be secure. The writer
14. says she is not heartless but demonstrates that she is.

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

15. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

16. A. I am fairly sympathetic because while I don't disapprove of anger at her damage to
17. the furniture - altho' it was also her home- I hate the cruelty even to cats. She doesn't
18. need any sympathy she is quite strong herself.

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

19. A. Mostly Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

20. A. Difficult this - perhaps my own reaction - Joel

A.8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

21. A. I think this is written by a woman because she dwells more on Joel's faults and
22. weaknesses to make the feminist point that both sexes have weaknesses.

Participant 8f Interview

1. V. ...was there anything in the story which reminded you of anything in your own
2. experience or anything that you have heard about or been told about...
3. P. (4)
4. V. It doesn't matter...
5. P. I don't think there is (.) I don't think there is
6. V. OK (.) erm what did you feel at the end of the story what do you think might
7. happen next
8. P. (8) I think I assumed that because it was a short story that was the end (.) but
9. when I was (.) that it was very carefully constructed and there was no next (.)that
10. was a small snap shot erm of the short story and (.) that's the genre (.) so I didn't
11. expect anything else (.) and I wasn't sufficiently interested in the characters to
12. make up (.) anything for myself
13. V. Right That's what the question is trying to get at really erm and we'll go on to
14. the next question about how true to life or how realistic do you think it was the
15. story itself and the characters
16. P. (8) I think that the story (1) hits somewhere (.) but quite well (.) it's that sense
17. that this is totally outside of his own experience but there is something credible
18. about it (.) and I think that the credibility comes from the detail
19. V. Right yeah so it's quite a realistic in a way it portrays little everyday details you
20. mean rather than the characters themselves
21. P. Yes(.) yes but they have some kind of erm (8) that question fits in a bit with my
22. own research (12) I think here on page eighty nine 'following' no not following
23. 'recalling the shambles in his own refrigerator Joel can't find anything to eat'
24. followed by 'things don't stay hung up when he hangs them' (.) now these are
25. things that I know are real and I know people like that even though I don't know
26. people actually like Joel so they give Joel a kind of credibility I know they're books
27. but that that (.)
28. V. Yeah I see what you mean the details give them depth
29. V. erm did your feelings for the characters change at any point I noticed that you
30. said that you felt fairly sympathetic toward both of them but did that was that kind
31. of consistent throughout the story or is there any point where it changed
32. P. (5) I don't think so (.) yeah (.) I think it was that they (.) I recognised them as
33. characters in a story and was prepared to give them each (.) their due but I didn't
34. see them as real real
35. V. Right yeah so you felt the same throughout
36. P. Yes
37. V. Yeah
38. P. Yeah
39. V. and did you feel any differently toward them at the beginning than you did
40. towards the end because what you have got is two different stories
41. P. (.) mean stories in a way
42. V. well you've got Joel presented first I was just wondering whether you had
43. changed your opinion about him at the end after reading Becka's section (.) and
44. vice versa
45. P. (5) well now that you ask (.) in Joel's half of the story his picture of Becka is
46. erm more of the classic compliant female (.) and his is a picture of Joel is as the (.)
48. stereotypical wandering male (3) who actually doesn't understand his own feelings
48. at all he regrets calling the cat Uglypuss and then is absolutely devastated to find
49. that he doesn't have it (.) er that is a bit of a surprise or an interest (.) that there
50. was that dimension to his character that he actually cared about the cat
51. V. Yeah yeah so that was in his section that yeah but it didn't change after you
52. read her part
53. P. No no oh yes the (.) looking for the cat (.) is in her section isn't it

54. V. er I'm trying to remember now yeah its got it in both section because he goes
 55. doesn't he go and look for it towards the end of the bit (6) yeah because that
 56. section works well in a way because er the two sections kind of get confused (.)
 57. yeah because you actually have some presentation of her as well in his section
 58. P. yes
 59. V. ok (.) Do you think it would have made any difference to the way you felt about
 60. them if you had Becka's section first if you had her story and then Joel would it
 61. have made any difference to the way you felt (.) It's probably difficult to answer in
 62. the abstract
 63. P. Well I'm thinking that it wouldn't work
 64. V. No
 65. P. well I was thinking it wouldn't work (.) it wouldn't work (.) you need the longer 66.
 section first (.) and then a sort of coda (.) if you done (.) Becka's section first it
 67. wouldn't have worked with a short story
 68. V. Right but say it had been written with more her a longer section for her
 69. P. Yes
 70. V. and (.) I suppose more sort of insight into her
 71. P. Yes yes (.) it could have yeah it would have to be completely re-written but yes
 72. V. Yeah
 73. P. she could talk (.) she (.) we could talk at length about the people she (.) wants
 74. (.) a man in a state of shock about a male divorced older grateful
 75. V. em
 76. P. We could have gone (.) they could have expanded that might be quite good to
 77. do actually (.) but the other way round (laughs)
 78. V. Hard work but yeah interesting yeah
 79. P. Yeah
 80. V. What effect did her actions with the cat have on your sympathy for her did it
 81. make a big difference to the way you felt about her (.) if she hadn't acted in that
 82. way if she just destroyed the furniture and hadn't touched the cat would that have
 83. made a difference
 84. P. Yes it would (.) I don't like cats (.) but I really cannot bear the idea of anything
 85. alive just being dropped in a dustbin (.) and yet on the other hand I think I
 86. understand her more because she's done that (.) it gives an extra depth to her (.)
 87. despair really
 88. V. Right
 89. P. and and and her desperate frustration that wants some of the way of getting at
 90. this person
 91. V. Yeah
 92. P. (.) I mean she knows that destroying the furniture is nothing he'll just go to the
 93. goodwill shop and buy another one (.) he can't buy another cat
 94. V. Right yeah
 95. P. or he can't buy that cat again
 96. V. Yeah so that actually has a big effect about the way you feel about her I mean
 97. does it make you feel less sympathetic towards her or more in a way because it
 98. shows her anger and despair (.) that's what I'm trying to get at
 99. P. (8) Sympathy's a funny word (2) perhaps I've been too academicalised (.) I
 100. really look at them as you know characters how well are they drawn and what
 101. have you done and what does this (.) rather than just identifying with them in a
 102. story (5) so I can't handle it (.) at that level
 103. V. No you are recognising it as fictional construct
 104. P. Yes yes and much much more interested in how people did things and what
 105. they did
 106. V. Yeah
 107. P. There are some things (.) I mean there are some books where I'm totally
 108. carried away by the characters but not by this lot

109. V. Right () so constructed do you think ()
110. P. I think so and maybe reading it for the first time (.) and of course some of
111. those people who had already done it for you had already read the story they
112. knew the collection that it had come but I didn't erm so I think I read it (.) in
113. stylistics terms
114. V. em that's right you sort of get a mind to it so then you know what you're
115. doing
116. P. Yes yes
117. V. ok are there any comments you wanted to make or would like to make on the
118. questionnaire that you didn't get the opportunity... (.) I guess that's interesting that
119. point that's come up that that you related to in that way as a fictional text rather
120. than something to engage with
121. P. Yes (.) at an emotional level yes (4) and actually it's a question you ask on the
122. questionnaire because as I've said it is difficult to separate these two of these
123. things that I'm reading for academic work now and for pleasure
124. V. Yeah yeah
125. P. (4) can I have another look at the questionnaire please to see if there is
126. anything that I thought at the time (pause) No I can't think of anything that struck
127. me (.) can you tell me who wrote it
128. V. Yes it's Margaret Atwood yeah I was going to tell you at the end yeah (.) well
129. (that's good as it ()
130. P. It didn't leave any gaps in my head but that maybe because I didn't have any
131. space at the time (Laughs)
132. V. So are there any general comments you want to make about the questionnaire
133. itself I mean I realise that it is a long story and very time consuming to do erm (.)
134. any there any other comments you find it fairly ()the reading is a bit difficult to
135. try to put to
136. P. Yes I have problems with this kind of erm following other people's logic in this
137. sort of in this way so I hope that I I hope I managed to make it (.) something that
138. was both useful and comprehensive (3) the only way I would be able to offer any
139. comment on the questionnaire is to see how other people have answered it and
140. put all the bits together and say oh yeah they've all said well then perhaps I
141. should have re-worded that so that they would all get that (.) this kind of thing
142. other than that I think it (.) I was quite interested because of course I'm going to
143. have to do a questionnaire myself.
144. V. Yes

Participant 9f

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. The story is about the breakup of a relationship between 2 people - the relationship
2. ended badly - there is/was a power struggle.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

3. A. O.K.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

4. A. The story seems very sad and also realistic. I can imagine this happening - I like to
5. read to escape mundane, everyday sadness!

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

6. A. Pompous, egotistical, chauvinistic, thinks he's got everyone's number, slightly
7. pathetic, immature

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

8. A. totally unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

9. A. Sounds like he gave nothing to his relationship - expected the woman to
10. adapt/change, and when she did, he didn't want her any more.

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

11. A. Also slightly pathetic, insecure, too willing to please, plays the martyr, angry, sad.

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

12. A. fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

13. A. I don't like what she did to the cat! Up to that point where she dumps the cat I was
14. fairly sympathetic.

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

15. A. Mostly Joel

Please try to give reasons for your answer

16. A. The writer devotes most of the narrative to Joel and his point of view. Portrays
17. Becka doing an inhumane act (the cat dumping).

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

18. A. A man

Q.9. Please try to give reasons for your answer

19. A. Stereotypical views of women wanting commitment, monogamy - being a 'nag',
20. restricting freedom etc. Becka doesn't have a clear voice.

Participant 9f Interview

1. V. was there anything in the story that reminded you either of your own experience
2. or something that you've read about.
3. P. erm. (1) I suppose you relate it to people that you know (.) I mean I've known
4. people like Joel before (.) and er (.) which is why he irritated me so much probably
5. (.) erm (1) I couldn't relate to Becka at all I thought I could do to begin with but
6. when she did the thing with the cat then (.) I lost total any (.) sympathy that I might
7. have had with her erm (2) I suppose (.) break up of relationships and (.) when he
8. goes out for the meal and (.) he's looking at chatting up someone are all things that
9. you're very aware of either in your own life or in (.) literature or films or (.) what
10. have you so (.) yeah (.) that would be (.) and (.) I don't know things like the
11. landlord (.) problems with the landlord are all things that erm (.) not necessarily
12. aware of in my own life but (.) you are through literature or (.) you know the
13. whole idea of the landlord and (.) problems etc. yeah
14. V. how realistic did you think the story was
15. P. erm (.) I think it was quite realistic until the cat incident (.) that just threw it for
16. me then it just (.) became totally unrealistic (.) erm I didn't think it was something
17. that (.) Becka's character would do (.) erm (.) I don't know I just went totally off
18. the story up until then it was realistic (.) I thought yeah
19. V. what were your feelings at the end of the story what did you think happened
20. next
21. P. erm (.) well I mean I was kind of like (.) totally caught up in the cat so I suppose 22.
- when I thought about what happened next I thought (.) I wonder if she'll go (.) to
23. rescue the cat but I know that she won't (.) and he won't find the cat so the cat
24. will die but I'm sure that (.) the story wouldn't go on to the (.) fact of the cat's
25. death you know it's a symbolic thing rather than (.) a real thing I suppose (.) so
26. yeah I mean when I finished it I just (.) was thinking about the cat (.) really
27. V. did your feelings about either of the characters change at any point in the story
28. P. just the cat would be (.) I mean I wasn't (.) I didn't like Joel to begin with erm
29. (.) I didn't like (.) a lot of his comments about (.) you know the fact that he'd
30. educated Becka and things like that so I was sympathetic towards Becka before I
31. met her when (.) you know (.) when she came into the text (.) erm (2) and I think
32. that could have a lot to do with my own (.) personal politics of (.) the fact that I'm
33. a woman and things like that (.) and I liked Becka to begin with and was (.) totally
34. sympathetic with her and then (.) you know even to the extent that (.) ripping up
35. his house I thought (.) fine but (.) when the cat became involved (laughs) yeah
36. V. so you were more sympathetic towards her in his section
37. P. yeah (.) I think (.) I think that's me yeah
38. V. and in her section you
39. P. no I don't know when the cat comes into it I know that (pause as flicks through
40. story to find out when we find out about the cat)...see I was quite sympathetic with
41. her until (.) you know when she's talking about spraying the boot polish or shoe
42. polish or whatever it's horrible you know (.)
43. V. so you lost sympathy for her then
44. P. yeah (2) but my view to Joel didn't change I didn't feel more sympathetic
45. towards him at the end I mean I just didn't like him (.) as a character all the way
46. through (.) so that didn't change
47. V. would you have felt more sympathetic towards Becka if her version of events
48. had been presented first
49. P. I don't think it would make any difference in that I was sympathetic to her
50. anyway (.) erm (.) because (.) all the time Joel was saying (.) you know (.)
51. particular things about Becka I'd be thinking 'oh yeah' (.) you know I'm sure her
52. side of the story (.) you know I relate more to women's side of stories than (.)
53. men's usually so (.) yeah

54. V. were there any comments that you would have liked to have made about the
 55. story that you didn't have space to on the questionnaire
 56. P. no cause you left a gap saying have you got er (2) no I thought (5) yeah (2) no
 57. there was nothing else that I really wanted to add (.) that I can remember yeah
 58. V. any comments on the questionnaire
 59P. well I found it really hard (.) not to read the questionnaire before I read the story
 60. but I think did you say on it not to read the questionnaire before we read the story
 61. V. I can't remember now
 62. P. because (.) I don't know (.) when you read you always read for a purpose and
 63. the purpose of reading this wasn't pleasure it was to fill in a questionnaire so I
 64. can't remember if I looked at the questions before I read it (.) in which case I'd be
 65. reading to answer the questions
 66. P. the thing at the end that said did you think it was written by a man or a woman
 67. (.) I found that very very hard to answer because I mean I've put a man in the end
 68. but I'm very (.) unsure about that and I'll tell you one of the reasons why is
 69. because I read (.) the beginning of that because you do look for clues (.) and so I
 70. read that (.) and I thought well perhaps it was by a woman (.) because this looks
 71. like it's beginning of a story that could be written by a woman (laughs) anyway so
 72. I thought perhaps (.) you were looking at you know (.) women and men writers
 73. V. what made you think it was a man particularly
 74. P. erm (.) you see when I read it again when you sent it to me I I rethought that
 75. because I couldn't remember whether I'd put a man or a woman (.) and this time I
 76. was thinking more well maybe it would be a woman because (.) the reason I
 77. thought it was a man was because (.) he was so (.) irritating you didn't get Becka's
 78. point of view (.) he was making all these sweeping generalisations about her and
 79. you know she didn't have any thoughts of her own till she met him (.) and then I
 80. thought well perhaps it's a woman (.) and she's purposefully (.) setting him up as a
 81. (.) really unattractive character (.) you know so

(told Margaret Atwood - has read her but not short stories)

82. P. it was time consuming but I didn't mind because erm (3) I mean I suppose
 83. because I'm doing research myself at the moment so therefore you're more
 84. sympathetic to people who are doing research you think oh well people have made
 85. time for me in mine and you know how important it is so...it wasn't overly time
 86. consuming I can't remember how long it took me to do but (.) the questionnaire I
 87. did very very quickly it wasn't as though I (.) spent a lot of time thinking about it
 88. and doing it it was like initial reaction (.) and I suppose most of that was time you
 89. know you think well I'll do this now
 90. (Becka's actions with cat) it seems to be such a weird thing to do (.) I mean like
 91. you can understand if you're angry with someone like ripping up their room to a
 92. certain extent I mean it's a bit of an exaggeration but er (.) the way she describes it
 93. in detail tying the cat up in a shirt and she's got the scratch marks I notice (.)
 94. horrible ...I found it an easy questionnaire because there weren't big long bits
 95. where you had to write loads so (.) you didn't look at it and think oh no and
 96. you've got you know choices and that as well

Participant 10m

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. The souring of a relationship and the defining moments in its breakdown.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

2. A. O.K.

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

3. A. It's a well trodden path: 'the relationship' and the struggle for the moral low-ground 4. as it breaks down is very familiar in prose fiction.

Q.3. How would you describe Joel?

5. A. a randy, cat loving slob, but quite candid about his motives.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

6. A. Fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

7. A. Selfish and unfaithful; who attracts a modicum of sympathy because he cares for 8. Uglypuss, or at least doesn't harm it intentionally.

Q.5. How would you describe Becka?

9. A. A spiteful psychotic, with disturbingly sadistic tendencies. Her attacks against 10. inanimate objects and animals suggest she should seek help immediately.

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

11. A. totally unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

12. A. How can you have any sympathy for anyone who abuses cats? Then makes 13. pathetic black jokes about it.

Q. 7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

14. A. neither

Please try to give reasons for your answer

15. After a reread: They are both self-serving egoists

Q.8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

16. A. A woman? But not with much conviction

Q.9 Please try to give reasons for your answer

17. A. Becka gets the final word.

Participant 11m

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. Selfish Jewish social activist becoming outcast. Ex-girlfriend goes over the top
2. getting her own back on him for selfishness.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

3. A. not much

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

4. A. First half where 'Jewish voice' came through was repetitive and going nowhere.
5. Second half where female voice took over was again repetitive and (I found)
6. uninteresting. The over reaction with trashing the room was illogical to me. The
7. incident with the picked up girl contributed nothing and contradicted rather than re-
8. enforced the image I was building up of Joel.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

9. Professional protester. Someone I wouldn't like or have much in common with.
10. Someone who shocks and is non-conformist for its own sake, a bit immature.
11. Surprised he could pick up the girl.

Q. 4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

12. A. Fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

13. A. Self-centred. Stuck in a protesters' time warp. No self discipline (the writing
14. project). Also the fact that he has attracted near-universal animosity (landlord, party
15. guest, girlfriend, right-wingers, left-wingers) and has even got a shaky relationship
16. with his cat (no food, no medicine for it), as he had with his mother - all suggests that
17. he has an attitude problem.

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

18. A. Acquiescent - despite verbal tussles with Joel. Portrayed as not a strong
19. personality, hanging around him and somewhat surprised at herself for the 'revenge'.
20. Also shallow, confused and immature - like Joel.

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

21. A. fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

22. A. Worries about the cat. She's started something in 'high spirits' and bottled out
23. before it was over. Trashing a flat is immature. Sighing over the phone and the talk of
24. firming creams, the use of the husky voice to charm the landlord are all rather
25. coquettish. Her commitment to the 'causes' espoused was relegated at the expense of 26.
- maintaining the stability of the group, which she was threatening.

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

27. A. neither

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

28. A. Both fail to achieve satisfaction in their personal and social lives. Both are
 29. represented as having shortcomings emotionally. Becka is drifting off into a
 30. 'conventional' life - beauty creams 'it's a job' looking for 'anybody'. Joel is getting on
 31. and still playing student activist, always right whilst others are always wrong - Peter
 32. Pan/ Johnny Rotten.

Q.8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

33. A. A woman

Q.9 Please try to give reasons for your answer

34. A. I'm not sure! I wouldn't be surprised if I were wrong. Mainly intuition. The puss as
 35. focus of the broken-down relationship; the convincing woman-talk at the party. The
 37. stereotypical male thoughts we read. As I say - a male writer might also have
 38. produced this.

Participant 11m Interview

1. V. Was there anything in the story that reminded you of your own experience - or
2. something that you've read etc.
3. P. well there's the bit about er Uglypuss being dumped in er in a waste paper bin (.)
4. you hear about stories like that (.) from time to time kittens being got rid of and er
5. (.) police dogs being stolen by thieves and things like that erm (.) so there's that
6. little element to it (.) there is (.) I suppose the way that erm (.) what was the man's
7. name
8. V. Joel
9. P. Joel (.) yeah (.) the way he was thinking er you know he was stuck in a time
10. warp but erm (.) some of the things that he was sort of thinking I suppose you
11. know maybe a lot of other people will have thought you know young teenagers or
12. old teenagers (.) so I had a bit of sympathy for that (.) and also erm (.) the street
13. theatre things that they did you know with these wacky way out over the top (.)
14. well I think anyway (.) ways of portraying things very similar to some of the things 15.
- that they get up to at our college where my son is you know we went down to
16. Birmingham and you know you sort of have to (.) look as if you're approving of it
17. but in actual fact you think er you know (.) he'll grow out of it one day (laughs)
18. so that's what I thought of (.) that's sort of the impression that bit made on me erm 19. the
- cafe that they went into is very similar to the ones we used to go to as a student 20. in
- Liverpool you know exactly that type of thing cheap and cheerful and you could
21. meet nice people if you were lucky (.) yeah so (.) those are sort of surface things
22. the actual underlying theme of the story if I've understood it properly you know I
23. didn't empathise with but you know odd (.) surface details were familiar
24. V. how realistic did you think it was?
25. P. well I thought really you know somebody had probably sat down and thought
26. I'm going to write a story and right I'm going to draw a line down the middle of
27. the page and er (.) it's going to be that and that and it seemed to me so solidly
28. constructed that it was very unrealistic (.) it wouldn't happen in real life erm what
29. was your actual question ... how realistic...I thought it was really quite unrealistic I
30. think it was unlikely that you'd find a person with his extreme views erm (1)
31. matching up with a person who was representative of the little girl lost and
32. clashing head on like that in my own experience anyway it may be that other
33. people that's their bread and butter and it happens every time that (housing bill
34. benefit) thing in the Guardian (.) the chap that writes that (.) it seems to be full of
35. er very dramatic real life situations like that but it's not in my experience anyway
36. (1) fortunately (laughs)
37. V. did your feelings about the characters change at any point in the story ?
38. P. well (.) first of all the feelings of Joel and Becka both not Becka as Joel related
39. her but just Joel himself (.) first of all I think the impression built up as I was
40. reading it that he was a bit of a (.) erm looking for a polite word (.) erm (laughs)
41. erm (.) not the sort of person that I'd erm like to spend much time with really and
42. (.) he seemed very opinionated and egocentric and he was right and everybody else 43.
- was wrong and very very extreme and er and also a bit of a I didn't really like his
44. moral standards all that much (.) erm and then (.) when Becka came to sort of be
45. giving her side of things about what she thought of him er (1) she she was saying
46. one or two grudgingly nice things about him but even so that didn't sort of soften
47. the impression it just really made me think something about her for thinking that
48. about him erm (.) and his views on her he was very very selfish and self-centred I
49. thought and er (.) he didn't give a very balanced picture of her at all erm and when
50. we actually came to er to see her you know to read her thoughts in the second part
52. of it I thought that er she seemed a bit of a mixed up person (.) putting it mildly not 53.
- just because of what she did to the house and everything but also because of this
54. conflict that was going on inside her about erm er about wanting a bit of security

55. and not really feeling happy about going back to this house full of girls and
 56. everything was very temporary and so on and so on and so on erm (.) so my
 57. feelings about her I don't think (.) er I don't think they did change but that was a
 58. bit odd really because my first impressions er that I got through Joel's account of
 59. her I thought 'well these are going to be very one sided and heavily tilted towards
 60. you know not liking her' (.) and then erm when we actually came to find out about
 61. her I didn't really find much in it myself as a man white male forty seven (laughs)
 62. you know Caucasian (.) I didn't think er that she'd said much to redeem herself or
 63. did much to redeem herself really
 64. V. (points out that his part greater than hers)
 65. P. do you want me to say anything about that? yeah ? it did seem to be written
 66. more from the man's point of view because you know we had more of his thoughts 67.
 and there was a lot more sort of tapestry of society in his you know we had er how
 68. he got on with the establishment and how he got on with the group and how got
 69. on with her and how he got on with the girl he picked up and also his thoughts
 70. about you know inanimate objects like his La-Z-Boy whatever it was and so on
 71. and so on and we got his political views (.) and er so you were able to build up a
 72. fairly chunky solid sort of natural picture of him er whereas (Becka) you know it
 73. was (.) first of all she was put down through what he was saying in the first half
 74. and then in the second half she put herself down and she didn't even er there
 75. wasn't a balance in that sense that she was given as many facets as he was given to
 76. sort of justify herself or put her side
 77. V did you feel differently towards them at the beginning and the end
 78. P. I thought they were both pathetic actually all the way through (laughs)
 79. V. did you change your mind at any point?
 80. P. well once I'd er once I'd sort of worked out that erm (.) Joel was you know er
 81. (.) first of all it started out that erm (.) it erm (.) sorry I'm not putting this very
 82. clearly but you had to sort of (.) it had to dawn on you you had to build up this
 83. picture of Joel that he was actually a bit of a pillock really (.) an opinionated one er
 84. because at first you know (.) the things that you take in isolation at first that you
 85. could have taken either way he could have just been an angry young man or
 86. something like that but er as the story progressed you realised that it was him
 87. against the world you know and he was always right and they were always wrong
 88. and he was very sort of discontented you know in the cafe he said er you know
 89. 'what's the point?' at one stage and he must have been a bit stupid anyway you
 90. know for being such a revolutionary in the kind of (clipped lawn) area as he was
 91. working in you know but (.) doing these things in erm
 92. I mean I suppose I felt sorry for him because of what had happened to his cat but
 93. (laughs) that's nothing to do with him personally no no (.) and again with the girl I
 94. felt slightly sorry for her at the end because (.) her being crazy (.) well not crazy
 95. but mixed up and er unfulfilled (.) that came over quite sort of poignantly at the
 96. end really erm (.) but you know if you're asking me to (snap for a) for a two or
 97. three sentence summary of whether I changed my feelings throughout no I just
 98. thought that er they were both sad (.) both equally sad really but I get a clearer
 99. picture of him because he spent more time writing about him
 100. V. question about whether Becka's action with cat had any effect on sympathy)
 101. P. I thought erm I thought it was probably quite out of character really because I
 102. hadn't expected her to do (.) I think it's a fairly violent thing to do you know take 103. a
 little axe and wreck a house (.) I'd expect that (.) because he'd said that she
 104. could be very sort of conniving and wheedling you know with the landlord using
 105. her special voice her husky voice I think he said (.) and so on and also it sounds
 106. like they'd spent ages sitting round discussing life with a capital L (.) and then all
 107. of a sudden to flip I thought it was (.) I mean it could happen in real life but it
 108. came as a bit of a jolt to me (.) reading the story because of the way she'd been
 109. presented in the story hadn't led me to anticipate that sort of thing erm (.) what

110. did you actually ask me (laughs) well obviously I strongly disapprove (laughs)
 111. and erm (.) she did mitigate it slightly by being a bit worried as she was walking
 112. away and prodding it to see if she'd actually killed it and you know she was
 113. obviously (.) well I would say she was regretting it erm because she was (.) you
 114. know saying ' I wish I could find a trash can to get rid of this thing in' you know
 115. and then she was struggling to get it in and it was obviously a very traumatic
 116. moment for her so there was some redemption in that (.) but erm (.) I think really
 117. I was a bit incredulous because I didn't I wasn't expecting it to happen in the
 118. context that we'd had given to us really erm
 119. V. you didn't condemn her
 120. P. did I condemn her (1) it was a bit unconvincing really because if I'd had more
 121. build up to what had forced her to do it then I could understand it happening erm
 122. and it would have(.) you know I would have been able to pass a more thoughtful
 123. judgement on it but at the moment I'm sort of dismissing it out of hand because I
 124. don't really think it's sort of slotted into the story very well and so I don't take it
 125. seriously enough to pass a serious opinion on it really (.) you know it's like saying
 126. you know do you think Noddy should wear a blue hat or a grey hat really you
 127. know it's superficial to the story
 128. V. effect of change in point of view - Becka first
 129. P. well I don't think the (.) just thinking off the top of my head the biggest
 130. problem for me was that it was a shallow treatment she received that's the
 131. impression I take away from it that if it was a set of weighing scales she'd be right
 132. up in the air and his side would be solidly down so if it was just exactly the same
 133. depth of treatment and she was done first I don't think putting it first would have
 134. balanced the emphasis that he had erm (2) no and yeah and I think it would have
 135. probably might have been an interesting way (.) a more interesting way to do it
 136. because then you'd have had her side(.) and then you'd have had to have Joel
 137. going out to get the er pick up girl and then you'd have had erm er the back to
 138. Becka with the cat so you could have said it would have been a, b a type of thing
 139. instead of just a and then just b (.) so maybe there would have been (.) it would
 140. have given her (.) er (.) side of the story a little bit more clout because what you
 141. start with and what you finish with are are the things that you take away from
 142. performances and novels and things like that (.) so if he'd been in the middle it
 143. might have (downgraded) his participation
 144. V. are there any comments that you wanted to make...
 145. P. I think actually what you asked us put the thing on are the things I would have
 146. liked to say really (.) I mean we could go on to the language and so on it was
 147. quite good the language and some bits were quite nicely intelligibly written and so
 148. on but erm I think they were perhaps a little bit better than what he was writing
 149. (.) was it a he?
 150. V. actually it's a woman it's Margaret Atwood
 151. P. than she was writing about
 152. V. any comments about the questionnaire itself
 153. P. I can't remember anything about it (laughs)
 154. V. length of story - time consuming
 155. P. I don't know when I did this
 156. V. it must have been before Christmas
 157. P. right but erm looking through it it seems ok
 (research)
 158. P. as I say I liked the way that she put words together you know that had quite a
 159. powerful effect and when she was (.) one particular bit I did enjoy was erm at the
 160. cocktail party was it when this Jewish matron berated him you know and I thought
 161. that was you know it was very economically written but you knew exactly what
 162. was going on I could see it in my mind's eye (.) and I liked that part of it (.)
 163. mmm

164. V. (explanation of real life situation)

165. P. I viewed it with detachment in that sense really ... you could say that I when I
166. was reading it I was (.) I wasn't sort of sucked into the action or into the way the
167. characters were portrayed you know I was sort of thinking consciously in a
168. critique sort of mode all the time really (.) it didn't sort of engage me at all and I
169. didn't empathise with the people in it much well apart from a few little distinct
170. (aspects) as I was saying before

Participant 12m

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. It's about a couple who have or are splitting up. It appears that Joel has been
2. unfaithful to Becka and she's moved out. However she would like to get back together
3. with Joel but he seems happy without her.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

4. A. O.K.

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

5. A. I think the story improves as it progresses. The first part seemed stilted and
6. unbelievable, especially the dialogue exchanges. However once there is some
7. movement of the characters its quite good.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

8. Self-centred, unfaithful, critical, absent-minded, theatrical, manipulative, insincere,
9. insecure.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

10. A. Fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

11. A. The relationship failed because Becka tried to dominate Joel and she didn't give
12. him any feeling of support or confidence. Hence he probably went out with other
13. women who weren't a threat to his ego because they were 'semi-strangers'.

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

14. A. Impulsive, aggressive, sensitive, full of remorse, insecure, fickle, self-centred,
15. possessive.

Q.6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

16. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

17. A. Her confidence has been shattered by the fact that Joel has left her for other
18. women, she doesn't have his trust or respect any longer. She doubts her love for him.

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

19. A. Mostly Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

20. A. Most of what Joel says is critical of Becka and is one-sided. Becka is portrayed as
21. having some insight into what might have gone wrong with their relationship. Here

22. the author portrays Becca as being justified in her actions.

Q.8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

23. A. Probably by a woman. Becca is portrayed with some subtlety and understanding 24. for how a woman feels in this situation.

(Q.9 not answered)

Participant 12m Interview

1. V. was there anything in the story that reminded you either of something in your
2. own experience or something that you'd heard about or read about
3. P. (10) I think I've read stuff like this before but I can't really pinpoint where it is
4. V. How realistic do you think it is
5. P. I think the underlying basis of the story is quite realistic but the way it's presented
6. is very sort of (.) erm it's American (.) I presume an American writer (.) and it's a
7. very (.) it's a style of writing which (.) makes everything sound a bit superficial and
8. er (.) in a way and a bit sort of er (.) writing for entertainment purposes (.) which in
9. a way trivialises some of it
10. V. right (.) what were your feelings at the end of the story did you think about
11. what might have happened next
12. P. well (.) if I remember the story rightly there's a (.) conflict and that (.) both of
13. the parties view their situation differently erm (.) so possibly you could say (.) that
14. erm (.) they might get back together again in the future they might have some
15. reconciliation you know or alternatively go their separate ways and remember (.)
16. happy times in the past (.) but er no I thought that there possibly might be some
17. possible confusion in the future () it doesn't seem to be stated what it might be
18. V. did your feelings about the characters change at any point
19. P. well I didn't like either of them (laughs) but er (.) erm but (2) I put on the
20. questionnaire 'sympathetic to both of them' erm (3) yeah
21. V. so you felt sympathetic towards them even though you didn't like them
22. P. in a way I mean they both were hopeless I mean they hadn't tried you know (.)
23. and er (.) they also had these unrealistic views of each other erm (1) I wouldn't say
24. that they (.) I think I had a similar view of them all the way through
25. V. would you have had a different response to the story if you had the female point
26. of view first for example and then Joel's
27. P. no (.) not at all no er (.) I don't think it matters I think what matters is their
28. viewpoint on it (.) and it's interesting to see how (.) differently they viewed the
29. situation (.) whether (.) whether you had her view rather than his view first I don't
30. think it would matter
31. V. no (.) what effect did Becka's action to the cat have on your feelings towards
32. her
33. P. the cat he loved () that's quite a cruel thing to do erm I thought she was more
34. vindictive and harsher than he was and maybe that's (.) erm () I think because of
35. the situation she probably felt that she'd been victimised more than he had and as
36. he perhaps was more sort of laid back about the whole relationship (.) she felt she
37. had to do this to stake her claim
38. V. you think she was justified
39. P. no I don't think she was justified she thought she was justified but (.) erm I
40. think it's extreme you know
41. V. are there any comments that you'd have liked to have made on the
42. questionnaire that you weren't given the opportunity to
43. P. well questionnaires are very polemic aren't they and also this sort of
44. questionnaire is more difficult because you ask people to expand erm (.) I think I
45. think most of you've covered (pause) yes I said it was I thought it might have been
46. written by a woman (answer) yes I was right (laughs)
47. V. (any other comments)
48. P. the reading passage is quite long (pause) with a very short story you don't get
49. enough depth
50. V. anything you want to ask me
51. P. so you're comparing different viewpoints in the text?

Participant 13f

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. Two people's 'account' of the start of acceptance of the end of their relationship

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

2. A. Quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer

3. A. Humour. Things I could relate to i.e. some of their feelings and reactions rang true. 4. Touching. Believable.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

5. A. A. young, single, Jewish American man who works with a street theatre group. He 6. is lazy and self-indulgent and somewhat selfish. He finds it hard to see things from 7. another's point of view, to empathise. He is lonely, emotionally vulnerable and 8. confused by the world.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

9. A. Fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

10. A. To begin with, the story is written from his point of view and so the reader feels 11. bound to sympathise with him. He's been dumped by his loud, bossy girlfriend etc. 12. etc. (As the story moves to her point of view, I begin to re-evaluate some of his 13. account). Also because of a feeling of 'knowing what he was going through'. At some 14. points I identified with Joel.

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

15. A. In the first part, from Joel's point of view, she comes over as someone who shoves 16. their opinions down your throat. But in the switch to her point of view, she appears 17. more vulnerable.

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

18. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

19. A. As Joel's account begins to go into his 'affairs' and then we 'see' him in action, 20. picking up a woman, as another woman I begin to understand what the situation was 21. and how Becka felt. Also because in her account she seems vulnerable, lonely etc.

Q.7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

22. A. Both equally

Please try to give reasons for your answer

23. A. I feel that the author is trying to give 2 points of view on the same situation and
24. events. In both Joel's and Becka's accounts there are emotions and reactions with
25. which we can empathise.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

26. A. Don't know

(Q.9 not answered)

Participant 13f

1. V. Was there anything in the story which reminded you either of your own
2. experience or something you'd been told about or read about
3. P. erm (.) yes certainly there were parts of it (.) to do(.) just to do with relationships
4. and stuff that was certainly part of my experience or things I'd heard about
5. V. how realistic do you think the story was
6. P. yeah I thought it was realistic I think I put that in the questionnaire
7. V. yeah
8. P. yeah that I thought it was (.) quite a realistic story
9. V. ok (.) what were your feelings at the end of the story (.) what did you think
10. happened next
11. P. I think (.) it's hard to remember but I think from looking at my questionnaire
12. again that what I thought was that they were coming to terms with the end of a
13. relationship so that (.) I mean is that the end of the story is it a short story
14. V. it is
15. P. yeah I felt like they would (.) that would be the end and they would go their
16. separate ways
17. V. they wouldn't get back together
18. P. no
19. V. ok (.) did you feelings about the characters change at any point when you were
20. reading the story
21. P. yeah definitely like it comes over in the questionnaire that I did that erm (.) to
22. begin with I'm sympathetic with Joel because you get his (.) story first and (.)
23. don't particularly like her by the way he's portrayed her but that changes as you
24. see more about him having his affairs (.) and then about her (.) side of things and
25. her vulnerability and so on (.) so definitely my feelings towards her changed
26. V. yeah (.) so the way that the story's actually written influenced the way that you
27. felt towards the characters
28. P. yes
29. V. if you'd had (.) I know it's difficult to think in the abstract but if you'd had her
30. point of view first and then his would that have affected your
31. P. possibly I mean probably (.) similarly I'd have probably sided with her more and
32. then (.) that might have changed (.) I don't know if it would have changed though
33. because (1) because I'm a woman so I'd have identified with her more and I
34. probably wouldn't have been so sympathetic with him if I'd have had her side of
35. the story first
36. V. right (.) did you feel differently about each character at the end of the story than
37. you did at the beginning
38. P. yes (.) yeah
39. V. right (.) what effect did Becka's action with the cat have on your feelings of
40. sympathy for her did that affect the way you felt about her
41. P. (1) erm (.) yes but it made me feel (.) it made me feel more sympathetic rather
42. than less sympathetic
43. V. right
44. P. (.) because it was (1) (laughs) I knew what she (.) felt about that and I knew
45. what she was going through and it wasn't and I'm not (.) like (.) I didn't feel like
46. (.) against her because she was doing something (.) to the cat I could understand
47. her reaction there (.) and it made me feel more sympathetic towards her
48. V. that's interesting yeah...are there any comments that you'd have liked to have
49. made on the questionnaire...there wasn't anything that you particularly wanted to
50. say
51. P. I don't think so no erm no I think I covered most of it there
52. V. yeah was there anything about the questionnaire at all that you had problems
53. with

55. P. no I don't think so
 56. V. ok any comments on the story that you wanted to flesh out
 57. P. (.)
 58. V. or ask me (what research is about) length of story - time consuming?
 59. P. erm (.) yeah that was probably one thing I know towards the end I put less into
 60. it than I had at the beginning because I was thinking ooh right I've had enough of
 61. this now (.) you know but I mean (1) it would be difficult to get anything much
 62. shorter than that (.)
 V. (discussion of Woolf story - role of real life experience)

Participant 14f

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. We see the results of the break up in Joel and Becka's relationship and how they
 2. both are feeling after it. Becka has found it harder and is pushed into doing something
 3. which surprises herself and makes her sad whereas Joel reverts to old habits for
 4. comfort.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

5. A. Very much

Please try to give reasons for your answer

6. A. I liked the use of words and the clear picture it invoked. It was insightful.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

7. A. A politically active, creative actor. He's not into monogamy and found his
 8. relationship with Becka too confining. He doesn't do anything

malicious and because

9. I'm drawn into his character at the beginning I can't help but like him a bit even though
 10. I don't like the way it appears he plays with or uses women but there's no indication
 11. he lies or misleads them so I can't blame him totally. His fondness for the cat and
 12. description of his lack of a 'home' softens his worst parts.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

13. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

14. A. I think I answered this in the description. He has some responsibility and clear
 15. opinions. Because he's victimised (phone calls, eggs, comments etc.) we feel sorry for
 16. him. I like him for his honesty (participant refers to his description of the kind of
 17. women who 'turn him on') even though I don't necessarily like those views. also like
 18. his sense of humour.

Q.5 How would you describe Becka?

19. A. A woman who would like more love, attention (and monogamy) than she got from

20. her relationship with Joel. Quite sensuous. Creative, arty. Capricious. Quite strong
 21. sense of aesthetics. Rather insecure emotionally at present.

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

22. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

23. She's in a position I can sympathise with even tho' I don't identify with her (at all I
 24. think). She seems to have suffered more from the break up of the relationship that
 25. Joel did who seemed to find it restricting. She's driven to do something which she
 26. herself is surprised at. She's ended up with no job as a result of their split up so her
 27. anger seems justified in some way. She's sad at the end. Joel isn't it seems. She seems
 28. lonely and to have lost her confidence. Therefore I can't help feeling sorry for her.

Q.7 With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

29. A. Both equally

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

30. A. I believe the author switches, playing one character off against the other. For at
 31. least the first 2/3 of the story s/he is pro-Joel and very anti-Becka but when s/he
 32. describes Becka's actions this is dropped. I find this a clever way of involving us with
 33. the characters more.

Q. 8 Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

34. A. I'm really not sure (but tend to feel it's a man- crossed out.)

35. Q.9. I can't justify it at all - it was only because we come across Joel's character first
 36. and are drawn into him and his viewpoint. An observant woman could just as easily
 37. have put this together.

Participant 15f

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. A couple have recently split up after a long acrimonious relationship where he slept
5. around and she was a nag. She comes round to see him - obviously relationship is in its
6. death throes still and he's gone out, not wanting to see her. This crystallises all her
4. dissatisfactions and loneliness so she goes through the apartment smashing everything
5. he had that she hated and finally kidnapping his cat who she was jealous and leaving it
6. tied up in a dustbin.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

7. A. quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer

8. A. It would have been 'very much' - this is the kind of fiction I enjoy, seeing how
9. people work - but the cat bit made me feel uncomfortable at the end.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

10. A. Quite selfish, Jewish, arty, director of street theatre, left-wing, very politicised but
11. very superficial about personal issues.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

12. A. Fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

13. A. Was reasonably sympathetic - from his point of view he seemed lonely and Becka
14. seems like a pain - till I found out he was sleeping around when I could understand
15. her being such a nag.

Q.5. How would you describe Becka?

16. A. manipulative, false, cold, vicious.

Q.6 How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

17. A. totally unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

18. A. I can feel no sympathy for anyone who tortures cats. She does it to get back at Joel
19. without thinking of the suffering she's causing the animal.

Q.7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

20. A. neither

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

21. A. Both are presented as weak, not particularly likeable characters. The author

- 22. concentrates most on their flaws and is showing the destruction of a relationship of
- 23. two fairly shallow people.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

24. A. Don't know

Q.9. Please try to give reasons for your answer

- 25. A. No particular preference is shown to either character in terms of their 'masculinity'
- 26. or 'femininity'. No feminist stuff really, except in the way Joel treats women as
- 27. shallow. Could be a woman if Becka dumping the cat is supposed to symbolise her
- 28. dumping her old identity as a woman who moulds herself to what a man wants.

Participant 16m

Q.1 In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. The relationship between Joel and Becka has broken up. Through the story of one
2. particular evening shortly after their separation the reader learns something about their
3. relationship and their personalities. We receive this information first from Joel's point
4. of view and then from Becka's.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

5. A. Quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer

6. A. It is well written, the characters are interesting, not too black and white/ one
7. dimensional. The story, or the people in it, have credibility.

Q.3 How would you describe Joel?

8. A. Self centred and selfish. generally a loser and a loner who takes a certain perverse
9. satisfaction from his failure and from antipathy he provokes. He's stubborn. He would
10. cut his nose off to spite his face. Probably was quite idealistic and maybe still is, but it
11. is now hidden beneath a bitter surface. Intelligent and creative. Quite tough and a
12. survivor despite his inadequacies, who knows that he's actually better than the rest of
13. the world and that's his problem.

Q.4 How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

14. A. fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

15. A. He creates his own difficulties, he looks for trouble and he seems to have minimal
16. consideration for other people. He is completely self centred. I don't believe his
17. criticisms of Becka and his parents, because it's only part of his jaundiced view of the
18. entire world.

Q.5. How would you describe Becka?

19. A. Rather insecure and inadequate. Probably emotionally rather clinging and
20. possessive. Intelligent, but maybe a little dreamy. Emotional and a little unbalanced at
21. the moment. Still in love with Joel. Somewhat alternative and prone to short term
22. obsessions with fringe cultures/fads.

Q.6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

23. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

24. A. Although her treatment of the cat is horrific, she is at this moment rather
25. emotionally vulnerable. With her I feel that this is temporary and that if she can get
26. away from this relationship, she will be fine.

Q.7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

27. A. Mostly Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

28. A. her point of view comes second and so dominates. The horror of what she has done

29. to the cat is somehow glossed over.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

30. A. Sorry to cop out but I don't know. No idea.

(Q. 9 not answered)

Participant 17f

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. Joel and Becka are trying to come to terms with the break up of their relationship.
2. Both experience the same dilemma: in their mind they can rationalise the end of the
3. relationship, but their feelings tell them otherwise. The head comes out on top.

Q.2. Did you enjoy reading it?

4. A. O.k.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

5. I liked some of the humour, e.g. when B sees cat eating her yoghurt. I liked the tension
6. i.e. the disappearance of cat (I thought something was going to happen) It would be a
7. good film. On the whole, pretty predictable as a story.

Q.3. How would you describe Joel?

8. A. Politically minded, (manipulative). His views of the female gender are set. Sex is
9. important to him. Makes generalisations about women which are ill informed. He
10. thinks he knows women but he doesn't really.

Q.4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

11. A. Fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

12. A. The only sort of compassion he shows is towards his cat. Lacks humanity. Many of
13. the problems are of his own doing, he has chosen to adopt certain attitudes -
14. particularly his attitude that the 'personal' is of trivial importance. He is negative -
15. bloody minded, not open to inner change.

Q.5. How would you describe Becka?

16. A. emotional - somewhat easily led - for at least 2 years she thought this guy was
17. God. Good with people (sensual, intuitive)? Feels incomplete without the love of a
18. man. She is positive.

Q.6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

19. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

20. A. Because, in a way, she is still ruled by her emotions. She wants serenity: she
21. doesn't wasn't these emotional 'outbursts' but at the moment she had no choice. A bit
22. confused about love. Positive - wants to change.

Q.7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

23. A. Difficult question! Mostly Joel

Please try to give reasons for your answer

24. A. Most of the story is written from Joel's perspective. We gain insights into Joel's
 25. history - past/present. I get the impression the writer 'knows' Joel more than Becka.
 26. However, I think the writer maybe wants to sympathise with Becka - but its difficult
 27. to find concrete reasons for this in the text.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

28. A. Man

Q.9. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

29. A. As a woman myself, I don't think he the writer has entered the 'female mind'. He
 30. (the writer) describes an example of female behaviour but not what Becka is thinking
 31. - at least, not in the same way/depth/detail, he does the mind of Joel.

Participant 18m

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. A couple has just split up. Joel is getting on with life pretty much as he always had -
2. the separation hasn't made a great deal of difference. Becka wants to get back with
3. Joel, sort things out. She has realised she's dependent on him, but can't get over his
4. infidelity. At the end she wants to get even with him by messing up his apartment and
5. hiding the cat.

Q.2. Did you enjoy reading it?

6. A. O.K.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

7. A. It's a while since I read anything like this, so I quite enjoyed the difference. I found
8. the changes in narrator/narrative style and tense a bit clumsy and confusing. I couldn't
9. sympathise with the characters.

Q.3. How would you describe Joel?

10. A. self-conscious. Egotistical. A touch paranoid (maybe justifiably). Stubborn,
11. independent, inconsiderate. Calculating. Weak-willed (he couldn't trust himself not to
12. sleep with Becka again) A bit of a coward.

Q.4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

13. A. Fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

14. A. I felt sorry for him as a victim of 'hate campaigns' which wouldn't be very pleasant
15. for anyone. He had an unhappy childhood. He was nice to his cat. But he wasn't
16. considerate of Becka's feelings about his infidelity. He didn't face up to Becka -
17. avoided her when she wanted to call. He wanted to blank out anything which didn't fit
18. in with his requirements / caused him inconvenience (e.g. people who criticised him,
19. he was happy he didn't have to stay around with Amelia, Becka was a source of
20. inconvenience).

Q.5. How would you describe Becka?

21. A. Insecure, idealistic, dependent. Desperate, tenacious, naive.

Q.6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

22. A. Fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

23. A. At the beginning you are led to believe that Becka is quite a domineering figure.
24. She's always in the back of Joel's thoughts. Ironically, she evaluates her life in terms
25. of her utility to Joel. She fails, really, to impose any change on Joel (he doesn't eat
26. meat because she does the shopping) (should this bit be in the section on Joel)
27. whereas she had to put up with his wishes. Until the end she had only threatened to do

- 28. things, to change the status quo a bit more in her favour but didn't carry out her
- 29. threats. Contradiction between feminist statements and her subordinate role in her
- 30. relationship - idealist vs. realist.

Q.7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

31. A. mostly Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

- 32. A. I think the author wants to show how Becka had become trapped. In many ways,
- 33. this was of her own making, expecting things out of the relationship which were
- 34. ideals, but she did not manage to do anything to change the relationship. She is also a
- 35. victim of a social ideal/dogmatic upbringing which expected marriage and a
- 36. monogamous relationship.

Q.8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

37. A. a woman

Q.9. Please try to give reasons for your answer

- 38. A. Becka is an archetypal victim of the 'female condition' (does this term exist? Like
- 39. 'human condition' from realism/existentialism?). Joel's characterisation. Majority of
- 40. narrative focuses on Joel - must be achieved in order to put Becka's situation in
- 41. perspective. If Becka is archetypal, Joel is stereotypical. (I don't know if these really
- 42. explain anything)

Participant 19f

Q.1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. Joel and Becka are going through the break up of their relationship: she has
2. left him and though it wasn't clear at this stage that the relationship is over. Joel
3. decides not to attempt a reconciliation himself. The break up leaves him time to
4. consider the progress of his street theatre work and Becka reviews her feelings
5. about Joel and men.

2. Did you enjoy reading it?

6. A. ok

Please try to give reasons for your answer

7. A. It's very well written - v. concise, direct style with wry, witty humour. But the
8. characters, despite their progressive political and social work, are so
9. stereotypical - man doesn't want commitment but sexual freedom, woman wants
10. monogamy, suffers, feels scored and gets revenge. Joel's (summing) up of
11. Amelia is offensive. I'm fed up with the woman as victim role.

Q. 3. How would you describe Joel?

12. A. Selfish. More conventional than he thinks - on his attitude to food and
13. women. Lazy. A bit devious and calculating (underlined twice). Intelligent.

Q. 4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

14. A. totally unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

15. See character description above and he treats women too casually.

Q.5. How would you describe Becka?

16. A. Difficult - it's mostly through Joel's eyes, which is capable, unpredictable, a
17. bit dominating, fiery, having strong opinions, vengeful.
18. When she's on her own at the end of the story - a bit long suffering, vulnerable,
19. underconfident, compassionate, warm, has social conscience.

Q.6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

20. A. fairly sympathetic
(no reasons given)

Q. 7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

21. A. Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

22. A. The author presents thoughts and action from her point of view from p. 103 -
23. 110, allowing a sense of intimacy with her because the author doesn't judge her.

24. On the other hand, i.e. by contrast, the author simply describes what Joel does

25. and he is not really shown in any vulnerable, more open light.

Q. 8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

26. A. woman

Q. 9. Please try to give reasons for your answer.

27. A. Because of sympathy shown to Becka.

Participant 20f

Q. 1. In a few sentences try to explain what the story is about.

1. A. It is about a recent relationship, now ended and seen through the perception of
2. Joel and then Becka. The author uses their thoughts to paint a cameo portrait of
3. both. We see the discrepancy between their perceptions of each other and their
4. own self perception. There is a huge gulf of misunderstanding between them.
5. Uglypuss is a metaphor for Becka's anger and sadness. Joel's lack of emotion (or
6. his lack of acknowledgement of them) is contrasted with Becka's raw emotion.

Q. 2. Did you enjoy reading it?

7. A. very much

Please try to give reasons for your answer

8. A. My interest grew as I read the story - became slowly involved. Writing rather
9. enigmatic. Wanted to know more about Joel and Becka and their relationship.
10. Small details built up an interesting picture for me. Writing in present tense
11. involved me more. Suspense - written in overtly non-judgmental way - just
12. facts. I was encouraged to make my own decision about story. (Different
13. reasons given seen through eyes of Joel and Becka)

Q. 3. How would you describe Joel?

14. A. Typical man - looking for a mother figure. Needing security and sex without
15. being prepared to accept any responsibility. 'Little boy lost'.

Q. 4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

16. A. fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

17. A. Felt slightly sympathetic about descriptions of him as a small child looking
18. for food. But his overwhelming self-interest and lack of regard for others made
19. me distance myself from him. Last bit when he went looking for his cat invoked
20. my sympathy. Visual picture of him desperate to find Uglypuss made me
21. identify with him. Felt detached from him and involved at same time.

Q.5. How would you describe Becka?

22. A. Rather sad figure in her dependence on Joel. Through his eyes she seems
23. stronger than through her own. Desperate (hence her actions towards the cat).
24. Doesn't take power for herself - reliant on him for her own self-esteem.

Q. 6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

25. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

26. I can empathise more with her than Joel, especially with her anger. I am woman

- 27. centred so I find her more interesting than him. I've felt anger like hers in the
- 28. past and can identify with it. Joel uses women - depersonalises them for his own
- 29. convenience.

Q. 7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

30. Mostly Becca

Please try to give reasons for your answer

- 31. I am able to understand and empathise with her anger and grief. Joel is self-
- 32. contained and unable to express his emotions (in denial!) Becca comes across to
- 33. me as being truer to her feelings - warmer and more sympathetic. Joel seems
- 34. colder and more selfish and self-interested. He's into power in the relationship.
- 35. Also looking for a 'mother' figure to take care of him. Becca has more self-
- 36. knowledge. Analyses her feelings and motives.

Q. 8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

- 37. A. I really am not sure. There is nothing in this story to really make me aware of
- 38. the sex of the author. She/he seems to get equally well into the mind/persona of
- 39. both Becca and Joel - female and male

Participant 20f Interview

1. V. Was there anything in the story that reminded you of your own experience...
2. P. I think the fact that erm Joel was so sort of (.) emotionally stunted () that sort of
3. came out very very erm clearly and I could identify with Becka's position (.) a lot (.)
4. her sort of anger and hurt erm (2) the culmination of her sort of killing the cat I
5. could see erm (.) whilst I didn't approve of that (.) I really could see the stages that
6. led up to that (.) and the fact that he was (.) so sexually amoral and it didn't mean
7. anything to him erm (.) you know her feelings (.) the feelings that led up to
8. V. so it was a kind of real life relationship you had with the characters rather than a
9. fictional
10. P. yes (.) especially the second time yes
11. V. ok (.) what were your feelings at the end of the story what did you think
12. happened next
13. P. well I don't think there ever is an end() my feelings at the end were that there
14. was this sort of impasse and I could identify very strongly with her (.) her going
15. back to that house and the fact that () I did feel that the relationship was really
16. well done I mean it was a relationship it was like man and a woman that were
17. incompatible all the time
18. V. how realistic did you think the story was
19. P. I think it's quite true to life in erm (.) in the way that erm women do all the
20. emotional spade work in a relationship and the fact that Joel would play this little
21. boy who was like draining her energy she was a strong person and yet she looked
22. to him for affirmation and perhaps after the relationship had broken down she
23. began to question herself and you know sort of ()
24. V. you thought that was quite believable the way the characters were drawn
25. P. yeah the only thing I didn't really think was believable was the killing of the cat I
26. thought that was sort of like a literary device you know but yeah I thought the
27. characters were drawn really well
28. V. did your feelings about the characters change at any point
29. P. I think at first I felt sympathetic towards him when he was talking about his
30. going round scratching round for food erm I felt really sorry for him erm but (2) I
31. think as the story went on I just realised how self assured he was erm I think I
32. began to sort of feel a sort of impatience (.) a frustration which I thought was
33. really good because it was probably how Becka felt (.) so that grew as the story
34. went on (.) at first he seemed a sort of right on bloke politically (well motivated)
35. and all that and then there were like clues like the yoghurt you know that was the
36. last thing she'd left and he seems to be a victim and to me he's sort he's quite
37. symbolic of a certain type of man (.) little boy lost and getting ()
38. I think it actually got more intense as the story went on erm I lost patience with
39. him erm there are things (5) things like 'by that time he'd started ignoring her' erm
40. (2) he's neutral he's emotional second hand and I think as these little sort of clues
41. emerged I began to identify more with her think about ()
42. V. (question about change of point of view - would it have made a difference)
43. P. mmm yeah (.) I think so because it was done so subtly that erm at first there was
44. a slight sympathy with him and then I think as it went on I began to realise in fact
45. (1) that there was this other side to him he was sort of self interested almost like a
46. baby really you know (.) everything had to revolve round him (.) and I sort of felt a
47. sense of (.) betrayal's too big a word but a sense of erm (.) oh (.) you know yeah
49. he appears a right on bloke but underneath he's like that and again that is so true to
49. life in my experience (.) with lots of men that (.) probably that drew me into the
50. story more and (.) I think if I'd had her point of view first (.) I think in a way (.)
51. she was such an extreme character she was reacting to sort of coldness (.) his
52. controlling (.) his power even that it might have been too much and I might have
53. (.) I might have (3) had (some sort of) sensations but I think it was very cleverly

54. done (.) because it was like the control and the power in his silence that made her
 55. react as she did
 56. V. so you needed that first?
 57. P. I think so yes that that her reaction had to come against something which was
 58. controlling and I think if I'd had her sort of anger and passion to begin with I might
 60. (.) I might have thought it was a bit extreme I might have (.) you know(.) does that
 60. make sense ?
 61. V. yes so it helps to understand why she acted that way?
 62. P. yes yes (.) it did yes
 63. V. what effect did her actions with the cat have on your feelings of sympathy (.)
 64. did that affect the way you felt towards her
 65. P. no no (.) (.) feelings that I understood (.) I felt it was really sad when she got
 66. home (.) she said 'the cat could have been my cat' (.) but I thought it was in a way
 67. a great device to actually erm (.) show how driven to the edge she had been by
 68. Joel's behaviour (.) it was the only way she could actually get at him (.) (.) it was
 69. her extreme anger that had built up over her relationship with him
 70. V. any comments you'd liked to have made but weren't given space to on the
 71. questionnaire
 72. P. yeah perhaps (.) although it would be difficult erm how it relates to your own
 73. life you know things you've asked me now perhaps but there again (.) I think
 74. when I read it (.) I think on re-reading it you know I probably (.) I read it several
 75. times to begin with but then a period elapsed and you sent it out to me again (.)
 76. and then re-reading it again (.) I sort of had that initial thing to (.) I had more time
 77. perhaps
 78. V. you perhaps got more out of it?
 79. P yeah (.) but apart from that I thought it was really good
 V(discussion of research - information about author)
 80. P. I didn't know it was her (.) I hadn't read this story but I've read her () I think
 81. it was the bit with his mother with the food you know that bit sort of (Atwood
 82. (mother) but there again you sort of resist that being a feminist (you know what's
 83. behind all of that)

Participant 21m

Q. 1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story.

1. A. Joel and Becka were in a relationship and are not any more. Becka telephones
2. Joel. Joel goes out and picks up a girl and has sex with her. Becka trashed his
3. apartment and puts his cat in a garbage can. Joel looks for the cat. Becka is
4. thoughtful and unhappy.

Q. 2. Did you enjoy reading it?

5. A. not much

Please try to give reasons for your answer

6. A. depressing and time-consuming

Q. 3. How would you describe Joel?

7. A. Political, jaded, promiscuous.

Q. 4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

8. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

9. I understand his reasoning and motivation more, being male myself. He cares for 10. the cat too.

Q. 5. How would you describe Becka?

11. A. unhappy, angry, political, emotional

Q. 6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

12. fairly unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

13. A. she trashes his apartment and kidnaps the cat

Q. 7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

14. A. Both equally

Please try to give reasons for your answer

15. A. Gives both characters a point of view. Both seem plausible.

Q. 8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

16. A. Man

Q. 9. Please try to give reasons for your answer

20. A. The part from Joel's point of view seemed more believable - maybe because
21. 18. I'm male, and sympathise more with him.

Participant 22m

Q. 1. In a few sentences try to explain what the story is about.

1. A. Really difficult! I guess I would sum it up as ex-partners/lovers going through
 2. the after effects of a finished relationship. Ostensibly, he's okay about it and
 3. reverting to his 'type' before the relationship. (Ostensibly) she's not okay about it
 4. and is both wanting the relationship to continue and 'getting back' at him for the
 5 way he's behaved towards her. Mind you, whether you can say that this is what's
 6. happening, I'm not sure. I'm undecided as to whether Joel is kidding himself. (It
 7. strikes me that this is a bit 'meta' - I'm assuming you don't want me to say 'she
 8. kidnaps his cat')

Q. 2. Did you enjoy reading it?

9. A. very much

Please try to give reasons for your answer

10. A. For a start, it was a bit of a surprise. I was aware that I was very much
 15. reading 'for a purpose' and it was quite long. Once we started learning about the
 12. way the characters' minds were working, I was caught up in it. I'm genuinely .
 13. unsure about the characters and the way I feel towards them. - this is what I
 14. enjoy in reading: the reading is an exercise in thought. (I wrote my answers to
 15 part 1 before reading the story; I like to see shades of grey, not black and white.

16. (answers to part 1 - I read quite a lot of non-fiction for pleasure! Science things
 22. Fiction reading is quite an 'intense' activity for me, and goes hand-in-hand with
 19. 'thought' - if that makes sense. So even though John Wyndham's books are
 20 relatively light sci-fi - they're really better as studies of people, individually and
 21. in groups, responding to threats, usually ones they don't really understand.)

Q. 3. How would you describe Joel?

21. A. Given what I've just written, I'm nor sure! He seems to be 'right-on' -or
 22. wants to be. He seems to like 'control' - or at least tries to hide some of his
 23. insecurities by trying to control. There's a part of me that wants to say that his
 24. 'womanising' habits are just a cover for his being frightened to accept he wants
 25. to be 'loved' - but tend to think that it doesn't stop him being a 'bastard'! He's
 26. frightened of commitment, he has to 'prove himself' (probably more to himself
 27. than anybody else). Although he's got some problems with his view of himself,
 28. he seems to accept the way he is (maybe this is why I say bastard') in other
 29. ways.

Q. 4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

30. A. (ticked fairly sympathetic, fairly unsympathetic)

31. I'm sorry if this is problematic for your analysis, but I do mean both as opposed
 32. to 'not sure'.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

33. A. It sounds really corny to say that he's a 'tortured soul', but he clearly does

34. have a problem. Becka's on his mind and in truth he's probably not dealing with
 35. it particularly well, but I don't like his attitude towards relationships - it sound a
 36. bit too convenient. Actually, that's a good word - he does have genuine
 37. problems, his thoughts provoke him and he has a sense of 'right and wrong', but
 38. in his interactions (with women) he's not prepared to give. Becka's giving him
 39. some trouble, but he's not handling it properly and is at least partly to blame.

Q. 5. How would you describe Becka?

40. A. Ah, difficult! After a bit of time, I've decided that I quite like her. She's
 41. probably not as well educated as Joel, and I'm not sure if she's as 'clever' as he
 42. is. She's certainly more 'sincere'. She's fallen for Joel in a big way, probably
 43. understanding his 'pain' and thinking he's great (but just needs a 'good
 44. woman'!) - but it's 'Bad Love'. By allowing herself to think he'll 'change', she
 45. allowed his behaviour to reflect on her instead of him and it's destroying her. All
 46. this said, her view of herself must be pretty suspect: deep down she hasn't much
 47. confidence. Her 'violent' behaviour probably stems from a mixture of this, her
 48. love for Joel and what dignity she has left.

Q. 6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

49. A. very sympathetic

50. I thought I thought 'fairly, but after writing the bit for 5, I think it's probably
 51. closer to 'very'.

Please try to give reasons for your answer

52. A. I get the feeling that Becka is 'honest' and fairly 'true to herself'. Even if
 53. she's made some bad decisions/judgements, there's no 'side' to what she's doing
 54. - she's not trying to create an effect. However, she's responsible for some of her
 55. problems and however much Joel really thinks of her (as a person), if he's
 56. behaved in a way she doesn't like, she should go. In some senses, under the
 57. influence of Joel, she's out grown him - I think she's maybe a bit dazzled by him
 58. still though. (I do think she's wrong when she thinks Joel sleeps around just to
 59. get at her though).

Q. 7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

60. A. Mostly Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

61. A. I'm actually unsure about this too! I think probably because 'experience'
 62. teaches you that when reading (or watching a film/tv etc.) the 'little feelings'
 63. you get are exactly the 'little feelings' you're supposed to get. This doesn't
 64. suffice though, so maybe the 'detached' description of so much of Joel's doings
 65. just don't make me sympathetic towards him!

Q. 8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

66. How on earth can I answer this?! I know I probably should be able to, but after
 67. thinking about the other questions for so long, I'm really not sure. A big part of
 68. me thinks it was a woman, but on gut instinct, I'm going to say man.
 69. (After no. 9, I should probably say that intuitively I want to say it was written by

70. a woman, but when I think about it, I come up with man!)

Q. 9. Please try to give reasons for your answer

- 71. A. the greater sympathy I feel towards Becka together with the fact that it's
- 72. Joel's attitude towards women make me think it's written by a woman.
- 73. However, the fact that I feel more sympathetic towards Becka (and I'm male)
- 74. make me think it could well be a 'male perspective'. From this viewpoint, Joel's
- 75. behaviour is less 'towards women' and more just a character description. It's
- 76. interesting that Joel seems to be totally at ease with his sleeping around thing,
- 77. yet I still don't find it quite right: male or female perspective?

Participant 22m Interview

1. V. was there anything in the story that reminded you of your own experience
2. P. I take it when you say experience you mean quite broadly
3. V. yeah (.) anything really
4. P. yeah I mean certain er (.) certain (.) thought patterns (.) certain ways of thinking
5. about things yeah (.) without question (.) although (.) there's no sort of (.)
6. consistent 'oh I identify with this in this character' but er certain particular moods I
7. would have to say yes to that question
8. V. anything specific...there doesn't have to be
9. P. I find it difficult to pinpoint really right now but there were things erm
10. remembering the incident when he's been in the restaurant (.) or the eating place (.)
11. with Becka (.) and er she'd come back in from the toilet and said er (.) y'know
12. 'men make war women make peace' something like that whatever the quote was
13. (.) it was slightly melancholy I mean the description of the () afterwards and when
14. he was reflecting on it (.) there was a sort of melancholy feeling that came over me
15. almost like a sense of despair (.) I don't know why but that touched me (.) I mean
16. when I was reading it both times just little things like that (.) every now and then
17. (.) I felt that er (.) I felt quite sympathetic you know to the way that the thoughts
18. were going even though I (wasn't sympathetic) to the whole thing
19. V. so it was his thinking that
20. P. yeah a little bit but also I would say right at the end as well (.) when er (.) when
21. she was talking about the (.) wanting to find somebody else (.) who would be as
22. erm (.) what's the word she used
23. V. grateful I think it was
24. P. that's it yeah (.) I mean that word is so I mean really sad because (how little you
25. could ask for) aspirations and yet at the same time for her that would be the
26. epitome of what she would want you know she didn't want all the world's (laughs)
27. riches she just wanted somebody to be in a relationship where who appreciated it
28. as much as she did herself (.) I think the point about that which I must admit I find
29. quite poignant
30. V. right that's really interesting I'll tell you why at the end (laughs) what were your
31. feelings at the end of the story did you wonder what happened to them
32. P. oh that's a good question (.) no I didn't (.) no I must admit I did look at it as a
33. sort of completed unit (.) erm when I first read through it (1) I mean all in all I've
34. probably read through it about 5 or 6 times possibly not erm (.) maybe 3 of those
35. sort of beginning to end erm (.) 2 or 3 sort of flicking through bits and then
36. concentrating on little bits erm (.) the more I read it the more I thought about what
37. happened within it (.) but I don't think I ever considered the actual consequence of
38. what happened later on whether they got back together again or whether they kept
39. on fighting whether Uglypuss died or what (laughs)
40. V. is that because you weren't sufficiently interested in them or was it because the
41. story was complete
42. P. I think maybe I took it with that sort of erm (.) it's a short story (.) and it is a
43. complete unit within itself but er whether that's the case or not I don't know I find
44. it difficult to answer I'm not quite sure whether I have the introspection to build on
45. to the question
46. V. how true to life did you think it was did you think it was fairly realistic
47. P. I don't think there's anything specific that I would say doesn't sound as if it
48. could happen and therefore I found individual events and the way that they're
49. meshed together (you know) believable (.) again whether I considered it as
50. anything other than a story (.) just describing events I'm not sure (.) I didn't think
51. to myself these are two real people (.) what I did find was that their thought
52. patterns were very believable and convincing for me I thought you know I could
53. imagine people going through this

54. V. so it's more the little details

55. P. yeah

56. V. did your feelings about the characters change at any point

57. P. definitely (.) yeah without question (.) I mean I (.) I think the first time that I

58. read it (.) obviously you start at the beginning and go through don't you (laughs)

59. and erm (.) I wasn't quite sure what I thought about Joel for that (.) you know

60. because obviously the story's from his point of view and (.) and generally speaking

61. I could feel this sort of (.) erm slight (.) sense of despair from him and when he's

62. talking about his childhood again that was really quite a sad time you know (.) that

63. period of like longing as a kid sort of thing (.) I was really quite (.) sympathetic (.)

64. and yet little bits as I went through (.) especially when I'd already read the second

65. section (.) and so you could feel sort of the emptiness through Becka and then

66. going back and reading again (.) I found that that sort of shifted really quite a lot

67. V. so it was reading her section that changed your opinion of him

68. P. yeah (.) and then re-reading his section erm I found myself (.) although being

69. quite sympathetic again to you know sort of the broken-ness or the damaged-ness

70. if you like of the character as far as I perceived him anyway erm (.) I found him

71. much less sort of sympathetic (.) when you identify the sort of () pain (.) the

72. parallel if you like (.) the longing (.) that was going on (.) but I mean that was a

73. definite shift (.) I could feel that (.) I hadn't expected that (.) when suddenly

74. you've got that little break in the middle (.) and we're seeing things through her

75. eyes and what happened

76. V. if you'd just had his point of view do you think you'd have felt differently

77. P. erm (.) I don't think I would have dreamt up (.) the depth (.) of feeling that I

78. then (.) perceived in Becka's side had it not been laid before me (.) you know (.)

79. because certain acts when he er (.) you know he's agreed for her to come over (.)

80. and then suddenly really (.) decides to take power there and then and go out (.) it

81. seems quite reasonable you know if she's been a bit (hysterical) or whatever you

82. can oh well you know bad decision but er (.) when he goes out he (.) meets

83. someone and goes and sleeps with her (.) whilst that's (.) ok to a point you know

84. (.) when you see her point of view (.) he seems really not just shallow (.) which

85. maybe he seems first time around (.) but he really seems quite erm (.) shallow and

86. unfair (.) by then (.) when (.) from her side you think well (.) this is what she's

87. lived with and maybe it's I don't know (.) maybe it's a kind of a power play (.)

88. where he's exerting his right to do something which is going to hurt her erm (.)

89. whereas he could have stood there and said 'look I don't want to see you any more

90. please go' (.) you know that sort of thing (.) so that sort of thing was you know er

91. (.) strange

92. V. do you think it would have made a difference if you'd had her point of view first

93. P. I suspect (.) although I couldn't be sure that erm (.) it might have been almost

94. equal and opposite in that sense (.) you know although I think generally speaking I

95. think I felt slightly more sympathetic towards Becka overall erm (.) I think I

96. probably would have had the same shift (.) though I'd have still got (.) been sort of

97. empathising with her (.) and then maybe realising a certain sort of parallel with his

98. pain as well () it is kind of unequal though isn't it (.) I mean most of the story

99. seems to be from his point of view (.) I think most of the story tends to be from his

100. perspective (.) when you said that it made me just think well it depends (.) if this

101. story is (.) two sides the other way round (.) it seems to come across as that (.) so

102. I think I probably would have felt slightly (as if) I wouldn't have had the ()

103. switches (it would have been the other way)

104. V. what effect did Becka's actions with the cat have on you feelings about her

105. P. that's a funny one isn't it (.) because that seems (1) that is really horrible you

106. know I mean that's erm (1) I mean nasty (.) there's a part of me which I suppose

107. it says how much I sort of empathise with her feelings (.) because I found that (.)

108. not justifiable you know it was rotten (laughs) taking the cat and stick it in a shirt

109. with boot spray or whatever but erm (.) I found myself finding it strange but
 110. believable especially the point where she suddenly she's frightened that you know
 111. he might be dead (.) giving him a poke and he wriggles (.) but at the same time
 112. again I can't quite remember the way it's worded (.) the specific words were that
 113. she's not going to relent or whatever she's not going to back down (.) and it's
 114. almost as if she's been really pushed to the edge (.) and although you know you
 115. couldn't condone it as far as the cat was concerned (laughs) you know I think
 116. maybe I did think a little bit about what happened to Uglypuss you know
 117. although I didn't imagine Joel going round and finding him I did a little bit
 118. wonder (.) as in (.) do we assume that he was found or do we assume he died or
 119. well I thought well maybe let's not think about it too much but erm I found it
 120. made me feel much more strongly the despair that she was feeling when she did it
 121. (.) you know 'what is the one thing that I can do that is going to hurt this person'
 122. you know 'to make him feel the way I've been hurt' and therefore it was sort of
 123. (.) understandable shall we say not justifiable understandable (laughs)
 124. V. are there any comments that you wanted to make that I didn't ask you on the
 125. questionnaire
 126. P. gosh I don't know erm (.) having only read through it once I mean it was quite
 127. sort of reading through it yesterday (1) I don't think there's anything that I you
 128. know (.) I know when I was going through the questionnaire (.) I felt I was being
 129. pushed and pulled in all sorts of directions (.) because I think I saw that you can
 130. read with quite an ambivalence (.) so that feelings and beliefs about what's going
 131. on you know you sort of maintain them all in parallel (.) because your questions
 132. were asking to decide one way or the other I felt that I really did feel pushed at
 133. times because I couldn't really be sure where I was going and I think really you
 134. probably probed as much as (.) (I can't go over these little bits) when I first read
 135. it (.) erm when I first started reading I didn't feel that it was going to be a story
 136. that I was going to particularly enjoy it was one of those things somebody's asked
 137. for (.) assistance and you're going to do it you're going to read it and answer the
 138. questionnaire because it's you know (.) erm (.) but I did (.) as soon as I got into
 139. it I really really enjoyed it (.) and I can't get over the (.) sadness (.) for me (.) of
 140. this last little bit here (indicates end of story) do you know what I mean (.) it's so
 141. sad (.) it's like the whole thing in this last couple of pages (.) it's almost enough
 142. to bring you to tears you know (laughs) but in fact in the end I found myself
 143. thinking that (.) if somebody had said to me 'ooh what do you think of this' (.)
 144. read (it sometime) I'd probably say 'I'm not reading that' (.) and yet in the end I
 145. felt that (.) almost through your questioning and through having to read it again
 146. and look for those answers (.) I've enjoyed it so much more than I ever would
 147. have done and maybe (I'd never) even have tried (.) not sort of (.) specifically (.)
 (discussion of aims of research -)
 (problem with length of story)
 148. P. well yes (.) from my point of view erm I can only say you got away with it
 149. because it's so good () and the re-read as well because the questions were quite
 150. erm (.) you couldn't (answer them out your head) (.) it's not something (.) you
 151. read the story through and you go 'ooh well' I mean I guess some people could
 152. do but there's no way I could do that (.) and therefore it required a lot of effort
 153. (.) just because it's so (.) you know the questions (.) it's almost like a pack (.)
 154. you know the story's the thing (.) and the questions then add some more layers (.)
 155. you have to consider the question involved
 156. ...I found I really did spend quite a lot of time erm (.) that was more to (.) I think
 157. I made a comment didn't I with the covering letter (.) it took me hours and hours
 158. to do it (.) the point of that was not so much to say (.) 'you know I've spent ages
 159. on it so these should be good' (.) it's more to say that you know 'I've tried my
 160. best to be as honest and as thoughtful about the questions as I could possibly be'
 161. (.) you know rather than saying 'oh I can't be bothered to spend another five

162. minutes on it' (.) you know I tried to do as much as I possibly could (.) and
 163. therefore any sort of anything missing from the answers I gave (.) was probably
 164. because it's missing from me (laughs) as opposed to missing from my efforts of
 165. trying to explain it
 166. V. (efforts appreciated - need story with depth of characterisation)
 167. P. now I can't remember what it is but there's a film a Doris Day film where she's
 168. teaching reporting erm I can't remember who's the leading man () and she gives
 169. him a reporting exercise (.) it's an absolute classic where in a handful of lines he
 170. describes a robbery event (.) and first of all it's the robbery is from the point of
 171. view of the person who's robbed and then it suddenly switches to the point of
 172. view of the robber (.) about this you know mean kid from the back streets got no
 173. money got nothing and like the tension between the two is the whole point about
 174. the darn story (.) you know reporting is about portraying balance and truth and I
 175. found that came back to mind you know where suddenly you get the one side (.)
 176. which of course is all meshed up with the other side as well (.) and then you get
 177. another point of view which is (un/still ?meshed) (.) and I found myself ooh
 178. really you know seeing like a whole picture and except of course I'm not saying
 179. that (it's as deep ()) I felt that it was and I felt that I really went through certain
 180. experiences through reading the story (.) I mean I tend to consider what people's
 181. (.) you know what's going on in people's minds more than anything else so
 182. therefore that side of it really appealed to me

(discussion of the story - actor/observer)

183. P. the whole concept is really interesting isn't it (.) especially the point you made
 184. about erm the way (.) the over-riding effect (.) (what happens to the cat) yeah 'cos
 185. up to that point (.) if you can hide that bit of the story as far as the details are (.)
 186. maybe she's like (.) you didn't know if she'd let it go at the end or not (.) you can
 187. imagine people going through exactly the same process well I would imagine they
 188. would do and obviously that's what you're researching isn't it (laughs) so I
 189. probably shouldn't assume but erm (.) it's almost as if there are obviously
 190. different levels aren't there where some people would say 'no that's too far' or
 191. 'this is not' (.) er 'it's immaterial it doesn't matter'

(discussion of role of personal experience)

192. P. you could almost assume that er (.) thought patterns are relatively erm (.)
 193. similar (.) between people (.) the particular circumstances which bring them about
 194. (.) aren't necessarily that important are they (.) so of course if ever you've got a
 195. story and details which don't fit (.) you can sort of feel (.) if they're explained in a
 196. certain way then you can imagine that you know (.) if you can identify with it at
 197. all then you can go 'oh well circumstances are different but yeah I know that
 198. feeling' I know that feeling there you know (laughs) and you can even imagine in
 199. your own mind what brought it about () and therefore some of the details tend to
 200. shade around and you just try and imagine somebody else's (.) you know (.) see
 201. inside their heads (.) because you need to don't you
 202. P. I read quite a lot but I tend to read things which interest me I don't you know I
 203. don't sort of read widely and then go 'well I sort of enjoyed that or I didn't really
 204. enjoy that' () and I know that I do tend to like those things that deal with
 205. people's thoughts (.) you know that's the sort of thing which I find myself really
 206. engaged in (.) even when erm (.) I feel that I like the story told through
 207. someone's thought patterns (.) even science fiction things which I put on the
 208. questionnaire (.) sort of fantasy things (.) it's a huge field

(reference to Steven Donaldson)

209. P. what makes him quite unusual is that his characters are all it's all here (points
 210. to forehead) really it's all here you know whether it's like madness or () the

211. damagedness of characters is what makes them act in this sort of way (.) and
212. while it probably doesn't have the depth or the erm sort of compassion in some
213. ways (.) that I find really compelling ()

Participant 23m

Q. 1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. Joel is phoned by his ex-girlfriend Becka. H agrees to her coming to visit but
2. instead goes out for food. He picks up a young woman and goes back to her
3. room with her. Returning to his apartment, he notices that Becka has ransacked
4. his flat and stolen his cat. She has put it in a plastic bag, thrown it in a garbage
5. can to spite him.

Q.2 Did you enjoy reading it?

6. A. ok

Please try to give reasons for your answer

7. A. I found it quite painful to see inside the mind of such an unpleasant man. Also,
8. some of his attitudes to women were a bit close to home - can remember thinking
9. like him myself, once!

Q. 3. How would you describe Joel?

10. A. He is a selfish, self-centred, opinionated intellectual who seems to lack social
11. skills or any graces. Damaged by an inadequate childhood. A womaniser who
12. cannot see his conquests as people. A total shit!

Q. 4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

13. A. totally unsympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer

14. A. Anyone who seems not to care for the feelings of others, especially those of
15. Becka, doesn't deserve sympathy. His opinion is, as the story says, the only valid
16. one. Also, he shows little evidence of learning by his mistakes.

Q. 5. How would you describe Becka?

17. A. Serious, spiritual, intellectual and independent. Not afraid to debate things.
18. Has a repressed streak of anger and cruelty which is expressed vividly at the end
23. of the story. Also, good at communication, tactful. Also, an experimental cook.

Q. 6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

20. A. Fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

21. A. I feel fairly sympathetic towards Becka, but I find it hard to see how she
22. managed to stand Joel for as long as she did! Perhaps that's love!

Q. 7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

23. A. Mostly Becka

Please try to give reasons for your answer

24. A. Because they both get a good chance to put their case, as it were. One part of
25. the story is written from Joel's perspective, one from Becka's. But more is
26. written from Joel's, which reveals more of his unpleasant nature and does not
27. seem to be sympathetic. Also, the cat doesn't get rescued!

Q. 8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

28. A. I would say a woman - there is a depth of feeling there, as if the author has
29. shared some of Becka's experiences.

Participant 23m Interview

(First part of interview not recorded - but participant said didn't like either character particularly - would have had more sympathy for Becka if she had only trashed the apartment - not taken out her actions on cat - Joel - unlikeable character - didn't like the way he treated Becka - felt he didn't really love her - liked characters with the capacity to be cruel - but cat = innocent victim)

question about own experience

1. P. well there wasn't really anything in my own experience that it reminded me of
2. though (.) as I say I can I've read a number of books in the past where there are
3. characters like this erm like Joel particularly but no I haven't met anyone like him or
4. Becka at all (.) thank goodness
5. V. yeah (.) and you said it was the (.) you were more worried about the cat
6. (participant originally said he was anxious about the cat - wondered what had
7. happened to it - asked him whether he thought Joel and Becka would get back
8. together - said possibly since they seemed to feed on each other's misery)
9. P. yeah (.) that was my feeling at the end of the book you know that poor cat what's
10. going to happen you know (.) and er that's why I disliked Joel even more because
11. the cat was the victim of this story really (.) erm we didn't get his own you know
12. (.) as I say I didn't like Becka either because of what she'd done (.) if she'd just
13. gone ahead and trashed his room and that was it I would have admired her for
14. hitting back (.) but hurting an animal doesn't really go with my er world view
15. particularly
16. V. you called it 'creative cruelty' I think
17. P. creative cruelty that's the word
18. V. and you thought it was fairly realistic
19. P. quite realistic story yeah I can imagine people like that existing in the world er I
20. didn't feel it was over dramatised (originally said that was the skill he admired in
21. writers - being able to create realistic characters so you could imagine them
22. standing in front of you - mentioned science fiction writing of Steven Donaldson)
23. which you get with some fiction (.) they do things that are over the top (.) though I
24. suppose kidnapping a cat's fairly over the top but it's the sort of thing that some
25. people might do erm or they might steal something that belongs to them (.)
26. treasured c.d. or something like that (.) something they'd shared
27. V. yeah and you said you didn't particularly like either character
28. P. no (.) no I think they were almost as bad as each other(.) Joel slightly more so
29. but er I would imagine that Becka was a very er frustrating person er if you ever
30. hurt her she wouldn't respond but you know I should think she's very slow and
31. very cerebral and very (.) brooding sort of person (.) I don't know (.) not very
32. dynamic
33. V. and you were saying that his actions actually in a way justified hers because of
34. the way he acted and he picked up the woman Amelia
35. P. yeah (.) that's right
36. V. which was not acceptable
37. P. I don't think so no I think he acted like a total shit I said that in here you know
38. that's the way he is
39. V. so up to a point her actions are justifiable
40. P. yes apart from taking it out on the poor animal (.) even though it was called
41. Uglypuss (laughs)
42. V. I asked you if you felt differently about them at the beginning than at the end
43. and you said you didn't
44. P. no no I think that the fact that they that you saw his point of view didn't make
45. me feel any more disposed towards him (.) that in many ways he hung himself with

46. his own rope (.) I think erm maybe if I'd seen more of her point of view (.) perhaps
 47. I would have understood her a little bit perhaps understood how they got together
 48. and why she stuck him for so long and stuff but erm it didn't really help
 49. particularly

V (explanation of research)

50. P. I've always maintained a firm (.) distinction between fiction and the real (.)
 51. that's why I hate soap operas but erm when I read a good story even though I like
 52. science fiction (.) Steven Donaldson (.) complete fantasy but he writes characters
 53. that are very believable and I can imagine them standing in front of me and I
 54. remember their personalities I can almost smell their sweat you know (.) and that's
 55. a sign of a good author and I think this story is (.) I'd like to know who wrote it ...
 56. P. although I said it was a woman in my answer there I don't know it's difficult to
 57. tell sometimes (.) some authors are really good at writing things from the opposite
 58. gender's point of view (.) Donaldson is (.) most of his main characters are
 59. women...
 60. P. with a good piece of writing you find it hard not to I think which is good (i.e.
 61. talk about the characters as if they are real)...understanding comes about from
 62. reading a story and (.) cumulative gathering of evidence whereas sympathy is like a
 63. gut reaction it seems to me you like someone and that's it I find with characters
 64. that I've read about in stories I've brought up my view of them through the story
 65. and this is especially so with some of the things I've read recently where the
 66. character's actually changed a lot (.) developed through the plot I think that's er
 67. important because then you can understand them more (.) especially when you find
 68. out facts about their childhood (.) if they were abused or something which is what
 69. happened in one story I read and similarly with this one too erm you think 'oh yeah
 70. well you can probably understand why he did it' but you still hate them (.) they
 71. may be the vilest person on this earth but at least you understand why

Participant 24m

Q. 1. In a few sentences try to explain what is happening in the story

1. A. A left-wing Jewish American couple, who have recently split up, reflect on
2. their relationship. Becca calls to come round. Joel goes out and picks up a
3. woman, so Becca vandalises his flat and steals his cat and dumps it in a bin.

Q. 2. Did you enjoy reading it?

4. A. quite a lot

Please try to give reasons for your answer

5. A. The characters are believable and in an interesting milieu, and the dialogue is
6. often amusing.

Q. 3. How would you describe Joel?

7. A. He's committed to his liberal causes, though it's not clear why (cf 'It's not
8. about winning') or why he carries on. His politics seem rather reactive and clichéd
9. ('boring personal shit', 'pulling punches') and he seems to drift into things on
10. instinct and learn the hard way from experience (cf his thoughts on women,
11. p.100). He is rather naive (surprised at accusations of anti-Semitism) and
12. doesn't seem to think about strategies or goals in politics or his private life. But
13. underneath it all he is quite decent.

Q. 4. How sympathetic do you feel towards him?

14. A. fairly sympathetic

Please try to give reasons for your answer.

15. A. He's rather pathetic but seems to be just sufficiently cynical and genuine
16. about what he feels and wants, so that he isn't too pretentious or pompous.
17. Also, I feel slightly sorry for him because Becca (and others) is unreasonable in
18. her behaviour towards him.

Q. 5. How would you describe Becca?

19. A. Rather irrational, selfish and neurotic. According to Joel at least, she insulted 20.
- him, wouldn't take advice, forced her food on him, picked arguments (then
21. wouldn't argue rationally). She seems to be motivated chiefly by sexual jealousy,
22. and malice because Joel wouldn't settle down with her.

Q. 6. How sympathetic do you feel towards her?

23. A. Fairly unsympathetic

24. see description above

Q. 7. With which character do you think the author most sympathises?

25. A. Mostly Joel

Please try to give reasons for your answer

- 26. A. Becka has no redeeming features, while Joel has a basic decency and honesty
- 27. despite being naive, insensitive and occasionally irrational. On pg. 106-7 the
- 28. author tries to show a gentler side of her, guilty and weak, but it only makes her
- 29. appear more irrational.

Q. 8. Do you think the story was written by a woman or a man?

- 30. A. Don't know

Please try to give reasons for your answer

- 31. I can only tell when something's badly written.

Participant 24m Interview

1. V. Was there anything in the story that reminded you of your own experience...
2. P. erm (3) not that I can think of off hand (.) it's not something that I really noticed
3. when I was reading it no
4. V. ...anything that you'd read about
5. P. erm (2) no not especially actually no (.) no
6. V. what were your feelings at the end of the story what did you think happened next
7. P. erm (.) yeah I thought erm (.) well (laughs) well the first thing was I wondered
8. what had happened to the cat (.) whether he'd find it or not erm (.) also erm (2)
9. whether they'd get back together again erm (.) I thought they probably would I
10. mean at least they would I mean at least they wouldn't completely fall out they
11. might carry on as they are at the moment meeting each other occasionally and
12. falling out but (.) or they might get back together again (.) but I didn't think it was
13. likely (.) at the end of it
14. V. but you were concerned about what happened to the cat
15. P. er yeah (laughs) erm (3) er (1) I don't know 'cos I think erm no I think that's
16. why I'm (.) not that I particularly like cats or anything but it's just the (laughs) it's
17. more that I think that it looked from the story like she had either killed it by
18. spraying that stuff on it or (.) she'd put it somewhere where there was no chance
19. of him finding it so I thought that but (.) yeah so I (.) it looked like he probably
20. wouldn't (.) find it
21. V. how realistic did you think it was
22. P. erm I thought it was fairly realistic (.) fairly yeah believable
23. V. the characters seemed realistic to you
24. P. yeah I didn't really have a problem with that erm yeah yeah I thought they were
25. quite good yeah
26. V. did your feelings about the characters change at any point
27. P. erm (3) no I mean obviously it kind of develops as you find out more but in
27. terms of how I felt (.) what I thought about the characters (.) it didn't really erm (.)
28. there weren't any big changes no no I didn't feel any switch at any point no
- (participant showed questionnaire)
30. P. yeah I said the characters were believable here yeah...well yeah I said 'fairly
31. sympathetic' to Joel 'fairly unsympathetic' to Becka yeah
32. V. did that change towards the end when you found out what she did with the cat
33. P. no (.) not really (.) I mean that was (.) erm (3) no I wasn't too bothered about
34. that I mean as I say I was interested to see what happened to the cat but I didn't
35. think it was too shocking erm it was more that she seems to have (.) well it's
36. difficult 'cos she came across in the dialogue (.) as being pretty unreasonable (.)
37. although on the other hand it's kind of (.) it's all done from his point of view
38. anyway so you don't know how much he's kind of just (.) picking out but (.) kind
39. of (.) changing it (.) his point of view (.) but it comes over that she's fairly (.)
40. pretty unreasonable
41. V. (effect of having her point of view first?)
42. P. erm yeah (.) it would certainly have been different yeah (.) 'cos you've kind
43. already (.) having already had his (.) point of view then yeah I kind of already
44. didn't like her (.) and so in her bit (.) erm I'd already decided that (.) I suppose that 45.
- erm (.) she was being fairly unreasonable (.) and so when erm (.) when you get it
46. from her point of view erm (.) you know you're kind of picking out those
47. where she er seems like she's being a bit unreasonable about things and er (.)
49. 48. irrational (.) things like that so (.) but I think it's also in the (.) erm (.) yeah
50. V. what effect did her actions with the cat have on your sympathies (didn't really)
51. P. erm no (.) no (.) not particularly no (.) I mean it seemed like a fairly I only
52. thought she's kind of liable to do fairly sort of irrational things so that was just
53. another one (laughs)

54. V. any other comments

55. P. there was a couple of things I mean I think with the erm (.) the bits from her (.)

56. the narrative from her point of view (.) erm (.) I think it's still (.) not very

57. sympathetic to her the way it's written (.) you've got bits like erm (2) where is it

58. (.) erm kind of a bit (.) ironic really (.) like when she's hidden the cat (1) and yet

59. here it says that she's not heartless (.) she's more (.) it's a bit like (.) it's either

60. narrative or (.) free indirect thought (.) and it's kind of a bit (.) bit sort of ironic

61. really (.) makes her look like she's a bit (.) she's a bit stupid really (.) erm (2) and

62. like yes she hopes she hasn't killed it (.) the cat where she's actually sprayed (.)

63. furniture polish in its face or something and it makes you wonder if she's a bit

64. stupid really (laughs) it's difficult (.) I mean it's either (.) it's either just that my

65. impressions have always been (.) apart from I've already got my prejudices

66. because of the first half (.) but it certainly comes across as if the narrator is having

67. a bit of a dig at her as well

68. V. any comments about the questionnaire or the task itself

69. P. erm I thought erm (2) it was er fairly erm easy to do (.) I don't think I had any

70. problems with er (.) well apart from getting red and blue colours wrong way round

71. (laughs) erm yeah I found the questions quite easy to answer and they were rather

72. useful as well it made me think more about (.) sort of read the questions then read

73. the thing again it made me think more about erm kind of how sympathetic I was to

74. the two characters (.) it was actually quite useful...erm I thought it was quite long

75. when you first gave it to me actually I thought 'God' (laughs) but no it's not too

76. bad and it's very easy to read (.) I read it quite quickly (.) yeah

(discussion of research - comment on participant's reference to speech)

77. P. yeah (.) I mean it's obviously him (.) I mean (.) he's sort of whinging isn't he

78. so he picks out bits (.) conversations when she's been unreasonable you know he's

79. obviously (.) there's that sort of selection going on (.) erm (.) 'cos he's kind of (.)

80. wallowing in it really (.) conversations with these Jewish people who are having a

81. go at him (.) he seems to (.) go on about (.) conversations he's had in the past

82. (laughs) so yes (.) she's kind of thrown in with all of that so I suppose a lot of

83. that's with the the kind of selection of the (.) anecdotes he's (.) you know

84. V (comment on fact that speech and though presentation his speciality)

85. P. yeah it's the sort of thing I'm normally thinking about when I'm reading texts

86. yeah (.) but erm yeah her's is all more (.) it's all just sort of internal (.) narration

87. there's no dialogue (.) erm (.) so I mean (.) it's all just (arranged) from her point of

88. view or (.) her thoughts (.) internal states and things erm (.) so she doesn't really

89. (.) present a view of Joel (.) in the same way that he presents a view of her 'cos he

90. goes back over various (.) conversations they've had (.) whereas she (.) it's just

91. about her feelings really in her section

Appendix Sixteen Responses to Sympathy Scale, Comparative Study

Participant	Joel	Becka
Am	-2	+1
1f	0	0
2f	+1	+2
3f	+1	0
5f	+1, -1	+1, -1
4f	+1	0
6m	+1	+1
7f	+1	+1
8f	+1	+1
9f	-2	-1
10m	-1	-2
11m	-1	-1
12m	+1	+1
13f	+1	+1
14f	+1	+1
15f	-1	-2
16m	-1	+1
17f	-1	+1
18m	-1	-1
19f	-2	+1
20f	-1	+1
21m	+1	-1
22m	+1, -1	+2
23m	-2	+
24m	+1	-1

+2 = very sympathetic
+1 = fairly sympathetic
0 = no opinion
-1 = fairly unsympathetic
-2 = totally unsympathetic